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IRELAND

IN THE

LAST FIFTY YEARS

(1866–1918)

BY

ERNEST BARKER

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I have to thank Professor Adams, Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions in the University of Oxford, for help and criticism.

E. B.

November 1916.

I desire, in sending out this second edition, to record my obligation to Mr. Wells and Mr. Marlowe, the authors of two volumes on recent Irish history which I have used as the basis of a new chapter on the history of Ireland during the War.

E. B.

January 1919.

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IRELAND IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

(1866–1918)

INTRODUCTION

The contact, which has too often been a conflict, between England and Ireland is as old as the University of Oxford. The University began somewhere about the year 1167 : the entry of the English into Ireland came in the year 1169. The Irish Question, like the University, is thus seven hundred and fifty years of age. But what exactly the Irish Question is—that, in itself, is still another question. According to Sir Horace Plunkett, it is ' the problem of a national existence, chiefly an agricultural existence, in Ireland '. From this answer one would gather that the Irish question is largely a question of economics. That, however, is not the view of a great number of Irishmen, to whom it is first and foremost a question of politics. ' The Irish Question '—these are the last words of a book by Mr. Barry O'Brien—' cannot be got out of the way until the claims of Irish nationality are recognized,' and such recognition means ' an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs '.

Perhaps one may say that the Irish Question, as it has shown itself through the centuries, goes even deeper than politics and economics. It is the result of a clash of two ways of life. England early evolved the conception of the State. We may even say that England was the first heir of Rome, among modern nations, in the transmission of that conception. But it is a conception which under most of its forms—and there have been several—has failed to

square with the tribal conception so long maintained by the Irish. The feudal form of the Middle Ages did not satisfy mediaeval Ireland. The administrative form of the Tudors and Stuarts did not satisfy the Ireland of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The parliamentary form of the eighteenth century was very far from satisfying eighteenth-century Ireland. We have still to see—and here there is far more hope than in the past—whether the democratic form of the last fifty years will ultimately succeed in allaying Irish unrest. In the past, at any rate, unrest has generally abounded. The attempt of the State to enforce an impersonal and impartial law, which they have never admitted to be either impersonal or impartial, has galled the shoulders of Irishmen. Their instinct has tended towards a system, or absence of system, based on clannish and personal relations, whether it took the form of loyalty to ' the Chieftain ' or that of boycott—in other words, of excommunication and outlawry from the clan. In the realm of property the clash between the two conceptions has reverberated loudest and longest. The legal conception of private property, which the English State has automatically enforced, is fundamentally alien (or, one should perhaps say, has been in the past fundamentally alien ; for to-day, with the advent of peasant proprietors in Ireland, the old world of ideas begins to change) to the more communal conception implicit in a society which has long cherished tribal traditions. It is for this reason in particular that the Irish Question may well seem at times to be a question of an economic order.

The conflict between two ways of life suggests an underlying conflict of races. It is easy to talk of the antipathy between the Saxon and the Celt. But what is easy to say is not necessarily the right thing to believe. Even if we admit that the English are pure Saxon or Teuton in blood, we have to remember that they have not failed to find a reconciliation with Celtic Wales, or with the Celtic part of

Scotland, any more than the Teutonic Franks or Sueves failed to find a reconciliation with the predominantly Celtic stock which they found in France and Spain. But we cannot admit that the English are pure Saxon in stock. They are an amalgam in which Celtic blood is a constituent ; and it is perhaps more true to speak of the Anglo-Celtic than of the Anglo-Saxon stock. We shall do well to beware of any facile explanation of the past drawn from a supposed antipathy of race ; and we shall be wiser if we turn our attention to the facts of geography and history. We have to remember, on the one hand, that there is a sundering channel, and that moister skies and a warmer temperature make Ireland different from Great Britain—a land green with deep grass, which almost seems designed by nature for a pasturė-land ; a land chequered with alternations of sun and cloud (*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*), in which a peculiar strain of melancholy, brooding over the past, and of gay humour, which laughs over the present, finds an appropriate home. We have to remember, on the other hand, that history—not always a rational or a justifiable process—has laid a heavy hand on Ireland. The administrative form of the State, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, introduced, by the hands of Mary, of Elizabeth, of James I, and of Cromwell, alien landlords and alien settlers holding alien conceptions of property ; and in the sixteenth century it also introduced something of a conception of the Church, as a department of administration, which Irishmen could not, and would not, adopt. The parliamentary form of the State, in the eighteenth century, introduced three things—in the first place, a penal code directed against Irish Catholics, not so much, perhaps, on religious grounds, as with the idea of supporting, under the veil of religion, the economic settlement of previous centuries which had given the land into the hands of Protestants ; in the next place, a commercial code directed, in the interest of English commerce and industry, against the commerce and industry of Ireland : and in the

third place, the entire subordination to the English Parliament of the old Parliament of Ireland (1719), followed, after a brief recovery of some measure of independence (1782–1800), by the dissolution of that old Parliament under the Act of Union of 1800.

It was natural that the old oligarchical English Parliament of the eighteenth century, swayed partly by landlords and partly by great commercial interests, and jealous, in addition, of its own dignity, should do these things. But what the past has done, the present and future can undo. Much, indeed, of what the administrative and the parliamentary forms of the English State did to Ireland in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries has already been undone. The democratic State, in the last fifty years, has disestablished the State Church of Ireland; it has bought out, in large measure, the Irish landlords; and it has turned its thoughts, amid great difficulties, to the restoration of a Parliament in Ireland. As for the commercial and the penal codes—they were destroyed long ago by the parliamentary state that made them. It seems to follow, if we look at Irish problems from this point of view, as created by history, and due to particular forms which the development of the English State assumed at various times in the past, that there is hope of the future. If these problems really rested on an actual and absolute racial antipathy, independent of history and historic events, there would be no solution except a clean separation of Ireland from England. The Sinn Fein movement, which postulates that antipathy, demands that solution. But if the problems of Ireland rest on historical acts and policies, we may hope that they will be solved, because they have been created, by the course of history; and we may trust that where older forms of the State, uncongenial to Irish temper, have failed, the new and democratic form, which in the last fifty years has already won many triumphs, will ultimately

succeed. It is not idly, or at random, that men have spoken, in late years, of the natural alliance between the democracy of England and that of Ireland. Either has helped the other; and Irish votes have been given for reforms in England,[1] as well as English votes for reforms in Ireland. The new form of State has meant a new approximation of the two peoples; it has made it possible for Irishmen to expound to Englishmen, in open Parliament, their way of life, its ideals, and its needs, and for Englishmen to begin to understand what before, to the great majority, was a triply sealed book.

If the march of history can be recalled to a truer path, it may seem that the way of geography cannot be altered. The Irish Channel, the Irish climate, the Irish soil—all these remain. They remain, and they are constant; but what does not remain, and what is not fixed, is the reaction of the human spirit upon them, or the way in which men use their wills to adjust themselves to these facts. Geography is not the mistress of the life of nations. The only final cause in history is the human mind, the thoughts it creates, the ideals which, under Divine inspiration, it attains. Geography neither predestined Ireland to be independent, nor foredoomed it to be dependent. It is men, and the wills of men, which make it the one or the other. Ireland, the Germans argue, must be independent, because an independent Ireland is a necessary geographical condition of that 'freedom of the seas' which they desire. It is as easy to argue the other way, and to plead that the close propinquity of the island of Ireland to the island of Great Britain, and their common position as outposts of Europe in the Eastern Atlantic, necessarily entail their

[1] 'The majority of Irish members turned the balance in favour of the great democratic reform of 1832, and from that day there has been scarcely any democratic measure in which they have not powerfully assisted.'—Lecky, quoted in Paul-Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland*, p. 145.

union in a common polity. But the life of Ireland cannot be determined by geographical facts—still less by the mere hypothesis that Irish independence is a geographical condition of a German ambition. The life of Ireland can only be finally determined by the general public opinion of Irishmen as to what is best for their country. Seas may divide, but they may also unite, according as men will to use them. Differences of climate and soil may involve different economies, but they do not involve different polities, unless men resolve that they shall. The polity of a country must not, indeed, interfere with the development of its proper economy ; but it is safe to say that the union of Ireland and Great Britain in a single polity resting on the same democratic basis cannot interfere with the development of such an economy in Ireland. On the contrary, that union has served, during the last fifty years, and especially in the last twenty, to aid Ireland in the attainment of the economic structure she needs. British credit has helped the transition from landlordism to a system of peasant proprietors : and the British market has been a natural market for the agricultural produce of Ireland. What has really sundered England and Ireland in the past is not geography, and still less racial antipathy, but historical policies and actions—policies and actions proceeding from a form of the English State which the Irish could not adopt. These policies and these actions can be changed : and the modern form of English State makes steadily for their change. What, alas, it is difficult to change is the historical memory of a people. The Irish remember the past, for they have been the sufferers from it : the English have forgotten, just as those who cause suffering often forget what they have caused. Folk-memory, like the sea, has many treasures ; but it has also its wrecks, and its sunken but unforgotten argosies of hope. It is this which, in Ireland, makes the *gubernatio reipublicae* a matter of difficult navigation.

I

GENERAL SURVEY OF THE PERIOD, 1866–1914

THE year 1866 marks something of a cleavage, both in the history of England and in that of Ireland, and consequently in the history of their relations. In England Lord Palmerston, who had stopped reform by being the leader of the party of reform, was just dead, and the leap in the dark, which in 1867 took England into a new era of democracy, was just about to come. In Ireland a change no less grave was being prepared.

The famine of the year 1846 had left as its legacy a new and tragic Ireland. Three quarters of a million of the population had died of hunger. The famine was followed by two consequences. One was the Clearances; the other was emigration. The Clearances, or evictions, had some economic justification. The small extent of the peasant's holding, inadequate, in a bad year, to supply the minimum needs of subsistence, had been one of the causes of famine; and some consolidation of holdings was an economic necessity. But whatever its economic justification, the grievance of eviction rankled bitterly in the hearts of the peasantry, who, losing their holdings, lost everything, since they had no alternative occupation to which they could turn. The scale on which eviction was practised made the misery which it involved still more bitter. From 1849 to 1856 over 50,000 families were evicted. In 1863 and again in 1864 the number of families evicted was little short of 2,000; in 1865 and 1866 it sank, but it still remained at the rate of nearly 1,000. Meanwhile the flood of emigration flowed high. Between 1846 and 1851 a quarter of a million of the population emigrated in each

year. Between 1851 and 1861 over 100,000 were annually leaving Ireland. Famine, eviction, emigration—this was a triple wave of woes before which men's spirits quailed. They have left their mark deep in Irish memory. They have left a legacy of hatred of England to the third and fourth generation. 'It is probable', writes Lecky, in a passage which Sir Horace Plunkett quotes as confirmed by his own experience, 'that the true source of the savage hatred of England that animates great bodies of Irishmen on either side of the Atlantic has very little connexion with the penal laws, or the rebellion (of 1798), or the Union. It is far more due to the great clearances and the vast unaided emigrations that followed the famine.'

Causes so dire were likely to produce a dire effect. That effect was Fenianism. The Fenians were a separatist and revolutionary party, whose motto, it may be said, was *il faut faire peur*, and whose methods were those of physical force. They drew their name of Fenians from the legends of old Irish history, but their origin was comparatively recent. Fenianism was, in effect, the reaction upon Ireland of the American Civil War. Numbers of expatriated Irishmen had learned the use of arms in the course of the war; and it was natural that some should begin to think of bringing their knowledge and their arms to serve the cause of Irish independence. The Fenian force itself was indeed an organization created on American soil; but in Ireland there had also grown, even before the Fenian force was formed, a parent revolutionary society, under the name of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), which was guided by men such as Stephens and O'Donovan Rossa. The whole revolutionary movement produced no revolution: the English government was forewarned and forearmed: and an American ship, the *Erin's Hope*, with arms and men on board, was captured before a landing could be effected. Isolated acts of violence were the only tangible results of the movement. Clerkenwell

Gaol was blown up by dynamite (1867) : a raid on Chester Castle was attempted, but miscarried (1866) : and—most famous of all—the rescue by some of the Fenians of two of their members from a prison van in Manchester, and the killing of a policeman during the rescue, was punished in 1867 by the hanging of three of the rescuing party, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, men famous in history as ' the Manchester Martyrs '.

But if the immediate and tangible results of the movement were small, its ultimate effects were far larger. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Secret societies were things unfamiliar in British politics ; and just for that reason the Fenian acts of violence, small as was their scale, inspired the fear they were intended to create. The results of Fenian violence thus combined with the results of the Reform Bill of 1867 to produce a new era of concession and conciliation in Ireland. The new electorate, and its leader Gladstone, who was put in power by the election of 1868 and held office till 1874, were eager to pursue a new policy in Ireland ; and opposition to reform was largely disarmed in advance by the obvious need of a new régime. In 1869 the Irish Church was disestablished and disendowed. Its tenants were enabled to buy their holdings, which they did, as we shall see later, on a large scale ; and its revenues, after satisfaction of the vested interests of the clergy, were set aside to form a fund for the relief of Irish distress. Next year, in 1870, a Land Act was passed which marked a new phase in the long series of Land Acts passed for Ireland during the nineteenth century. For the first time the interest of the tenant was definitely the main object of legislation ; and an attempt was made to protect him from eviction by the grant of a right of compensation for any arbitrary disturbance of his tenancy.

For some years after 1870 Ireland was comparatively prosperous and free from unrest. During this period a new

movement began in Ireland which has vitally affected Irish history ever since. In May, 1870, under the leadership of Isaac Butt, the Home Rule movement was launched, and its programme was enunciated, 'that the establishment of an Irish Parliament with full control over our domestic affairs is the only remedy for the evils of Ireland.' By a curious irony, the agitation for Home Rule was largely Protestant in its inception. Discontented and disillusioned by the successful passage in the British Parliament of an Act disestablishing the Irish Church, the Protestants of Ireland set their hopes for the moment on a separate Irish Parliament. This phase of feeling soon passed; and the Home Rule movement, in which from the first other elements than the Protestant had been powerful, soon became Catholic and Nationalist in spirit. Rapidly growing in strength and numbers, and aided by the Ballot Act of 1872, the Home Rule League was able in 1874 to return nearly 60 members to Parliament who were pledged to its principles and programme. By 1874, therefore, Irish affairs were already in the posture in which they have since continued to stand. The British Parliament was seeking to conciliate Ireland by reforms, and the mass of Irish representatives in that Parliament were demanding a separate Parliament for the domestic affairs of Ireland.

We must beware, however, of thinking that the Fenian movement had died when the Home Rule movement emerged. It still existed, and it was still powerful. In fact, for many years to come, Fenianism and the Home Rule movement were competitors for the support of the Irish people. They might indeed act together, as under Parnell they tended to do, but they represented different and opposing principles. The Home Rule or, as it has come to be called, the Nationalist Party has stood, and still stands, for parliamentary and constitutional action. Its members are content to use the channels of electioneer-

ing and of parliamentary agitation in order to gain a full measure of local autonomy for their country. The opposite party, whether it be called Fenian or, as in more recent times, Sinn Fein, desires a different object, and is devoted to different tactics. Its object is an Irish Republic, to which, as early as 1858, the members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood solemnly swore allegiance, vowing 'to take up arms when called on to defend its independence and integrity'. Its tactics are tactics of direct action. Participation in the British parliamentary machine is to be eschewed; and physical force is to be employed as occasion serves. The divergence of the two sets of ends and means may be illustrated by an analogy drawn from the world of labour. The revolutionary party in Ireland corresponds to the revolutionary or syndicalist party in the economic world. Both believe in direct action, and in a sudden paralysis of government by the use of force at a convenient opportunity; and both expect the sudden inauguration, during or in the wake of such a cataclysm, of a new society. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the Dublin revolt of 1916 like rushed to join like, or that the extreme Labour party in Dublin should have identified itself with the party of political extremists. The party of Home Rule, on the other hand, corresponds to that section of Labour which does not eschew politics, or cultivate the ideal of direct action, but seeks, through representation in Parliament, and through parliamentary pressure, to achieve the ideal of self-government in the world of economics. Syndicalists have despised, and will probably continue to despise, all followers of parliamentary action as visionary and ineffective; and political extremists in Ireland have tended to adopt a similar attitude towards the members of the Nationalist party. The fact remains that direct action, in the face of the modern State, leads to a direct and crushing rebuff, and, if effective at all, is only effective in provoking useless and tragic misery.

Under Butt, and down to 1878, the Irish parliamentary party achieved little if any success. The Conservative party, under Lord Beaconsfield, was in power (1874–80); and little attention was excited by Irish affairs. Butt was scrupulously constitutional, and he set his face against turning parliamentary agitation into parliamentary obstruction. After 1878, when Parnell came to the front, a great change began to appear. Parnell was personally almost the antithesis of Butt; and his hard and concentrated intensity necessarily meant a reaction from the gentle and expansive geniality of his predecessor. Within a few years the methods of the Irish parliamentary party were completely altered. From Biggar, Parnell borrowed the idea of obstruction, and by obstruction he sought to demonstrate to the British Parliament the wisdom of conceding another sphere for the exercise of the talents of the members of his party. From Michael Davitt, an old member of the Fenian party, he learned two other lessons. He learned, in the first place, the value of an informal and working alliance between the Nationalists and the Fenians. Just because he stood among the extremists of the Parliamentary party, Parnell was able to act with the party of extremists, and to reconcile, for the time being, two organizations which had before, and have since, been fundamentally opposed. He learned, in the second place, the possibility of a connexion between the agitation for Home Rule, which had hitherto been mainly political, and an agrarian agitation against landlordism. The strength of Parnell was thus that he reconciled the Nationalists with the Fenians, and brought both in contact with the economic needs and desires of the peasantry. He held together three things which had hitherto been separate. Political agitation was still, indeed, his supreme aim; and he advocated economic causes not for their own sake, but for the sake of the additional weight which they might give to the political cause he championed. Yet whatever the relative importance of the elements of the alliance, the

alliance was certainly powerful ; and it was rendered still more powerful by the organization which Parnell gave to his own immediate party, and by the ascendancy which he acquired over all its members. Under his leadership the party was Americanized in discipline and methods of action. The Home Rule League became a ' machine ' under the ' chieftain's ' control. In its local conventions it designated the candidates for the constituencies ; from those candidates it exacted a pledge ; and in return, if they were unable to make ends meet without some support, it paid their expenses from its parliamentary fund. In a word, Ireland, always in close contact with America after the great emigrations began, developed on her soil the American system of professional politicians.

Parnell was beginning to be the dominant force in Irish politics by 1878. In 1879 Ireland fell under the shadow of famine. The potato crop failed, and the corn crop was under the average. Fear was urgent in a land where men still remembered the great famine of 1846. Luckily relief was prompt and efficacious, and the horrors of 1846 were not repeated. But the results of the bad harvests of 1879 were none the less considerable. Tenants were unable to pay their rents ; and since tenants who failed to pay rent were not protected by the Land Act of 1870, a new period of evictions began. There had been under 500 evictions in the year 1877 ; in the year 1879 there were over 1,250, and in the year 1880 over 2,000. Meanwhile, in 1879, Michael Davitt had founded a Land League for agrarian agitation ; and in the face of the new campaign of eviction the Land League, armed with the new weapon of boycott, set to work. Parnell was its president : its aims were partly to bring about a reduction of rents, and partly to facilitate the acquisition of ownership of their farms by tenants. During the agitation which filled the next few years agrarian crimes increased, and where there had been a total of 301 in 1878, there was a total of 4,439 in 1881.

The Government, of which Gladstone was once more the head (1880–5), met this increase—somewhat inconsistently, but in a way by no means unprecedented—with a mixture of coercion and conciliation. On the one hand a Coercion Act was passed, early in March, 1881, with the object of stopping agrarian crime ; on the other hand a new Land Act was introduced in April, and became law in August, which went far to meet the demands of the Land League. Abandoning altogether the idea of free contract, from which he had already begun to depart in 1870, and ' relegating political economy to Saturn ', Gladstone sought to introduce a régime of fair rents, judicially fixed ; of fixity of tenure, to be secured by a system of renewable leases for fifteen years ; and of free sale by the tenant of his interest, and more especially his improvements, in his holding. This is the régime of the ' three F's '—a formula invented, as far back as 1850, by a society called the Irish Tenant Right League.

Neither conciliation nor coercion succeeded. The Irish parliamentary party, acting on the policy of *beneficia obtruduntur*, gave no credit for the Land Act. Moreover, in their scheme of tactics agrarian agitation was largely a means to political ends, and it would have been fatally impolitic to abandon such agitation, if only there were any plea to be urged for its use, before the attainment of these ends was in sight. Coercion failed equally. The Land League was suppressed, and Parnell was arrested in the course of 1881. Agitation only grew. Moonlighters were abroad ; and while Parnell was in prison, his lieutenants attempted, with poor success, to widen the old campaign for fair rents into a No Rent movement. Matters reached an impasse ; and eventually, in May, 1882, Parnell was released, on a vague undertaking, known as the Kilmainham treaty, to help in the restoration of order in Ireland, provided coercion were modified and other concessions were made. An era of conciliation seemed at hand,

but realization, as often happens in Ireland, was the opposite of expectation. Some of the extreme Fenians were outraged by the apparent understanding between Parnell and the English Government, and within four days of the release of Parnell the murder in Phoenix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish, the new Irish Secretary who was to introduce the era of conciliation, and Burke, the Irish Under-Secretary, shattered all hopes. Coercion became the order of the day for the rest of Gladstone's ministry.

In 1885 the eventful period, which had begun in 1878, attained its climax. The Conservative party, largely perhaps under the influence of Lord Randolph Churchill, managed, with the help of Parnell, to overthrow Gladstone's ministry. Lord Salisbury came into office: Lord Ashbourne's Act, providing means for the purchase by Irish tenants of their holdings, was passed: coercion was dropped; and Lord Carnarvon, the Conservative Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, had conversations with Parnell in order to discuss the future of Ireland. Things seemed shaping towards an alliance between English Conservatism and Irish Nationalism, of which Home Rule might be the ultimate fruit. Such an expectation, if ever it could have been legitimately cherished, was rapidly falsified. The Conservative party was not prepared to go as far as Parnell, rightly or wrongly, had hoped that it would. Gladstone, after the indecisive general election at the end of 1885, found himself ready to go further than he had definitely indicated, or most men had expected, beforehand; and he promised Home Rule and a general system of Land Purchase. Parnell embraced the alliance; and thus, within sixteen years of its enunciation, the programme of Home Rule had been adopted by one of the two great English parties.

The permutations and combinations of 1885 and 1886 concern the politics of England rather than those of

Ireland. It is true that, just as the Reform Act of 1867 had ultimately enabled Ireland to send a solid party of 60 members to Westminster to urge her cause, so the Reform Act of 1884–5, which was the last act of Gladstone's second ministry, enabled her to send an increased representation of 86 members, at the general election of 1885, to support Parnell and the cause of Home Rule. It is true, too, that the existence and action of this party were facts of vital importance for Ireland, and that by it the way of Irish development was necessarily directed along parliamentary and political channels. But the Irish party exerted an influence which was almost more profound on the politics of England. Henceforth the English party system was always profoundly disturbed at all times when neither of the two great parties had a majority independent of the Irish vote. This disturbance had been evident in 1885, when the union of the Irish with the Conservative vote had overthrown Gladstone : it was still more evident in 1886, when the union of the Irish with the Liberal vote overthrew Salisbury, and installed Gladstone once more in power for a few brief months. But the ways of an English party which depends on the Irish vote are generally hard ; and Gladstone, abandoned by many of his old supporters, failed to carry the Home Rule Bill of 1886 even in the House of Commons. He resigned : a new general election in 1886 returned an independent majority of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists ; and, with a brief interruption from 1892 to 1895, a Unionist ministry, independent of the Irish vote, held office for the next twenty years (1886–1905).

These twenty years are years of great importance in the history of Ireland, and in many respects they have witnessed the emergence of a new Ireland. The policy of the Unionist governments of this period, leavened perhaps by the ' Liberal ' Unionist element which had seceded from Gladstone's camp, was largely directed to the field of social

economics. In this field the main line of policy has been that of the encouragement of land purchase and the institution of a régime of peasant proprietors. The Liberal policy, as it had been pursued down to 1885, was a policy of taking for granted the relation of landlord and tenant, but of seeking to give to the tenant both fixity of tenure and a fair rent. Gladstone, it is true, under the influence of Bright, had recognized to some extent the principle of land purchase and peasant property, partly in the provisions of the Irish Church Act of 1869 which dealt with Church lands, and partly, though to a less extent, in some of the clauses of the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881. After 1885 land purchase became the word of the hour. Statesmen no longer took for granted the relation of landlord and tenant ; they sought to put an end to landlordism, and to turn tenants into proprietors. The Ashbourne Act of 1885 was the first move ; and Gladstone himself contemplated a Land Purchase Bill as the corollary of the Home Rule Bill of 1886. Under the Unionist ministries of the next twenty years land purchase made successive strides. The three great Acts, which we shall have to examine in some detail in a later section, are those of Arthur Balfour in 1891, of Gerald Balfour in 1896, and of Wyndham in 1903. Their cumulative effect has been to place a large part of the soil of Ireland in the hands of Irish tenants. Meanwhile two correlative measures of great importance were also carried. While Arthur Balfour was Chief Secretary the problem of the 'Congested Districts' on the West Coast of Ireland was faced and a solution attempted. Light railways were built to open up these remote districts; and by a section of the Land Purchase Act of 1891 the Congested Districts Board was created to grapple with the difficulty of those 'deficit' or uneconomic holdings, inadequate in size and quality to maintain their holders, which are so prevalent in Western Ireland. Again, while Gerald Balfour was Chief Secretary, in 1899, a Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, resting, as we

shall see, on an original and democratic basis, was created for the aid and instruction of farmers and the encouragement of Irish domestic industry. Finally, in 1898, as the political counterpart of this economic policy, a revolution was wrought in Irish local government by the Local Government Act of 1898. In Ireland (as also in England down to 1888) local government had hitherto rested with the squirearchy. In 1898 the squirearchy was dethroned, and local self-government through elective councils took its place. The Irish peasant, as he took over the possession of his holding from his landlord, took over also from the same hands the government of his County and his Rural District.

While this was the trend of legislation, the Irish parliamentary party was passing through many and troubled vicissitudes. In the year following the rejection of the first Home Rule Bill (1887) a new outburst of agrarian agitation began, and the Irish leaders invented a new 'plan of campaign', by which tenants were to demand large reductions of rent, and, if their landlords refused to agree, were to pay their rents into a 'war-chest' held by the National League[1]—an organization which, under a new name, was simply the old Land League suppressed in 1881. The agitation lasted till 1889, but it ultimately died down, largely owing to the Crimes Act of 1887, which armed the Government with new powers for dealing with agrarian crime, and under which the National League was suppressed. One of the aftermaths of the agitation was the famous Parnell case of 1888–9. *The Times* had practically accused Parnell and his followers of complicity in

[1] It is interesting to compare this plan with the Trade Union policy of strike. As a matter of fact, agrarian agitation in Ireland was consciously directed in imitation of the methods of industrial dispute employed in England. It is needless to indicate the difference between withholding labour (and thereby foregoing wages) and withholding rent, while still retaining the land.

agrarian crime, and had even printed letters, afterwards proved to have been forged by a journalist named Richard Pigott, in which Parnell was made to condone the murder of Cavendish and Burke in 1882. The whole matter was referred to a special commission of judges—the Parnell Commission—before which Parnell, in the course of 1889, was entirely cleared of the latter and graver charge, though, on the former, the finding of the Commission was one of censure. Parnell thus emerged triumphant from the ordeal ; but once more, according to what may almost be called the law of Irish affairs, the unexpected proved the usual, and within a year Parnell was irretrievably ruined. Early in 1890 he was proved to have been guilty of adultery ; and within a few months he was deserted by English Home Rulers and by a great body of his old supporters in Ireland. The Irish parliamentary party collapsed for some years into chaos and conflict ; and though in 1892 Gladstone obtained a majority at the polls, and a Liberal ministry once more introduced a Home Rule Bill, which passed the House of Commons and was summarily rejected in the House of Lords (1893), there was never any real prospect of the victory of the Nationalist cause.

From 1870 to 1890, first under Butt and then under Parnell, the way of parliamentary action had been followed, and the Irish representatives in Parliament had striven to gain the political object of Home Rule by the political methods of parliamentary agitation. Parnell, as we have seen, had connected the way of parliamentary action, on the suggestion of Davitt, with the way of agrarian agitation, and, to some extent, with the Fenian cause ; but the connexion, though it had perhaps added new force to the Home Rule movement in Ireland, had injured it in England. After 1890, it is perhaps possible to detect a reaction in Ireland against the whole system of tactics pursued in the last twenty years. That reaction did not, at any rate for

many years, take the form of recurrence to the old Fenian policy of 'direct action' in the sense of revolutionary violence. But direct action of a peaceful and non-revolutionary type began to come more and more to the front. Men began to feel that parliamentary action at Westminster distracted Ireland from an inner development on her own account. They began to think that though politics might be much, economic and social development might be more. It was true enough that Ireland had been gravely injured in the past by British legislation: it was true enough that the reparation of that injury, so far as it could be repaired, demanded fresh British legislation. But it was a mistake to expect that any legislation could be a *deus ex machina* to solve the Irish problem. The habit of expecting external help was the fatal legacy of long years of enduring external injury; but though the blame for the formation of that habit might ultimately rest with those who had inflicted that injury, the habit was in itself pernicious, and it was for the Irish people, by a new and vital effort on its own account, to regain initiative and to follow the motto *fare di sè*. Independent voluntary effort, within the domain of economic and social action, thus tended to become the watchword of the hour. We may trace the results of this spirit in three movements—that towards agricultural co-operation; that of the Gaelic League; and that of the Sinn Fein Society.

The founder of Irish co-operation was Sir Horace Plunkett, and its fruit was the Irish Agricultural Organization Society (I.A.O.S.). Sir Horace Plunkett was a moderate Unionist in politics; but in founding an organization for voluntary agricultural co-operation he appealed to Unionists and Nationalists alike. The one might be attracted by the consideration that the successful organization of Irish Agriculture would prove Home Rule unnecessary; the other might be drawn into the movement by the hope that a victory of self-government in the economic sphere

would be the greatest of arguments in favour of political self-government. The movement began in 1889; it was, in the sphere of voluntary and social effort, the counterpart of the economic and social legislation which the Unionist Governments were promoting during this period. The objects of the I.A.O.S. were to induce farmers to co-operate in the department of production and, as far as possible, in that of exchange, and to aid them, by advice and instruction, in the conduct of their farms. By 1895 the movement had been so far successful that a 'Recess Committee' sat to consider how far, and in what ways, its objects could be further promoted by Government help; and the result of that Committee was ultimately, in 1899, the institution of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. The result of the whole movement has been something of a revolution in Irish agriculture—a revolution achieved within Ireland itself and by Irish effort—which has put the Irish farmer, in many respects, ahead of the farmer in England, and in line with the progressive farmers of continental countries such as Denmark.

A few years after the I.A.O.S. was founded, Dr. Douglas Hyde also founded the Gaelic League (1893). The Gaelic League attempts in the intellectual sphere what the Agricultural Society attempts in the industrial—'the rehabilitation of Ireland from within'. The latter may recall, in some respects, the Agricultural Society of Piedmont, which played its part in the making of modern Italy; the former has its affinities with the revival in Bohemia, during the first half of the nineteenth century,[1] of the native Czech language and literature. The aim of the Gaelic League has been the encouragement of the use of Erse and of a native Erse literature. Classes have been founded for the study

[1] The parallel between Ireland and Bohemia (and also Hungary) is one which has been drawn in modern Ireland. Vice versa the Czechs of Bohemia were deeply interested, about 1840, in the 'Repeal' movement led by O'Connell.

of Erse throughout the country-side: books and pamphlets —partly reprints of old Irish texts, and partly original works—have been printed and sold broadcast; and an Oireachtas, corresponding to the Welsh Eisteddfod, with competitions in dance and song, poetry and oratory, has been held annually. The use of Irish in schools, the press, the pulpit, the theatre has grown: a literary renaissance of Ireland, particularly in the field of the drama, has accompanied the work of the Gaelic League; and Dublin has become a literary centre which every lover of good literature must necessarily admire.

The revival of a submerged language and literature is generally, as any student of the history of the Nationalist movement in Europe during the nineteenth century is aware, one of the most striking symptoms, and one of the most effective causes, of Nationalist movements. Just for that reason we may often see battle engaged between opposing sides on the ground of language, the one party seeking to enforce uniformity, more particularly in the schools, and the other defending the use of the national speech. No such battle has been joined in Ireland; and though the Government may be accused of having failed to encourage, it cannot be said ever to have sought to suppress the use of the old national language of Ireland. Until recent times Erse was a language little used—a language spoken only by some of the peasants of the West, and only acquired with difficulty by the new enthusiasts for its use; and the difficulties in the way of its revival were not interposed by the Government, but lay in the nature of the case. But though there was no opposition to its use, and though, as a matter of fact, the instruction given in schools to-day is often bilingual, it was perhaps inevitable that enthusiasts for the study of Erse should often tend to become advocates of separation. It is difficult to ascertain the exact facts; but it is at any rate true that some of the leaders of the Irish language

movement were on the revolutionary side during the troubles of this year, most notably P. H. Pearse, the head master of the Irish-speaking school at St. Enda's, near Dublin. And though it is unfair to judge the policy of any society from the acts of individual members, it would at any rate seem fair to say that there has always been a section of extremists in the body of the Gaelic League.

The extremist and separatist movement, however, is that of another organization which is known—or perhaps one should say unknown, for it is something of a mystery to most of us—under the name of Sinn Fein. *Sinn Fein amhain* ('Ourselves alone') might, in its broad sense, serve as a motto of the whole spirit which, in its various phases, we have been trying to describe—the spirit of self-help, self-reliance, and of *fare di sè*. In its more narrow and specifically political sense, the Sinn Fein movement, which started early in this century, is a lineal descendant of the old Fenian movement. Its object, according to the terms of its constitution, is 'the establishment of the independence of Ireland'; it aims at 'national self-development . . . by the aid and support of all movements originating from within Ireland, instinct with national traditions, and not looking outside Ireland for the accomplishment of their aims'. Sinn Fein has thus been opposed to the Irish parliamentary party; it has stood for direct action. Its goal is separation. Its immediate tactics involve abstention from parliamentary action, and abstention as far as possible from any recognition of British government. Its model is the policy pursued by Hungary towards the government of Francis Joseph in the eighteen years between the end of the Hungarian Revolution in 1849 and the winning of the Dualistic system in 1867—the policy of absolute passivity, and of refusing to take a single step of voluntary action which implies recognition of the existing régime. All things English are to be taboo; enlistment in the English army is to cease; English games,

dress and ways are to disappear. On the other hand a native Irish State is to be built up side by side with, and is ultimately to supersede, the alien and English State which at present dominates Ireland: an Irish National Assembly is to meet at Dublin, and Irish courts of arbitration are to act in lieu of the courts of law.[1] These are the tactics of the interim; when the day comes, the English skin is to be sloughed by a violent effort, and the new skin is to be indued.

But we shall not understand the rising of 1916, in which this type of policy ultimately culminated, unless we take another factor into account. That factor is labour unrest, and extremist labour propaganda. We have already had reason to notice the analogy between the extremists of the world of labour and the extremists of Irish politics, and to suggest that it was natural that the two sets of extremists should join hands. Trade Unionism, till lately, has not flourished in Ireland; and on the other hand, especially in late years, an extreme labour party has been active in Dublin. That party had no connexion with the 'politicians' of the Irish parliamentary party; on the contrary, it denounced them as the allies of the capitalists whom it attacked. Its natural allies were apparently to be found in the Sinn Fein movement; and an alliance was struck between the two. Incidentally the alliance illustrates the difficulty of prophecy in Irish affairs. Before 1916 the Sinn Fein movement could be accused of 'social insensitiveness' or apathy. 'It has appealed little to Labour,' says a writer of the year 1911, 'which is slowly becoming more conscious and more organized in Ireland.' That could hardly be said in 1916; though even in 1916 it was perhaps permissible to say that the alliance between

[1] At one time, as part of this policy of the native and real alternative state side by side with the foreign and sham state, the members of the Sinn Fein party had stamps, with the inscription Sinn Fein, for affixing to letters side by side with the ordinary penny stamp.

Sinn Fein and the extreme labour party in Dublin was a matter of common *intransigeance* rather than of a common cause.

It remains to trace, in conclusion of this section, the history during the last few years of the Irish parliamentary party, and of Irish politics in the narrow and more technical sense of the word. For some years after the fall of Parnell, in 1890, the Irish party was divided against itself; and those who had remained faithful to Parnell wrangled with those who had left him. Unity was found once more towards 1898, when William O'Brien founded the United Irish League. Beginning in Western Ireland as a society for agrarian agitation, like the earlier Land League (1879–81) and its successor the National League (1882–7), the United Irish League soon became the general organization of a united Nationalist party. The machinery of the League showed many traces of that tendency to reproduce American politics on Irish soil which we have already noticed. The basis rested on local branches, analogous to the American primaries, of which there were 1,460 in the year 1906. Next in the order of hierarchy, in each parliamentary division, came the Convention and the Executive of the division; and at the head of the whole League came a National Directory, with a standing Committee as its working agent, and a National Convention, held every year, at its side.

The unity of the United Irish League suffered a check in 1903. O'Brien, the founder of the League, showed himself in the opinion of the majority of the League too favourable to the Unionist Land Act of that year; and he was ultimately forced to leave the League he had founded, and to lead a small independent party of Moderates who were prepared to work for conciliation and a good understanding with the Unionist party. A similar split, in which the extreme wing was similarly victorious, threatened

the Unionists of Ireland in 1905. Even before 1905 the extremer Unionists had found some difficulty in accepting the policy of the Chief Secretary, George Wyndham, just as before they had objected to the conciliatory policy of his predecessor, Gerald Balfour; but in 1905 their discontent reached a crisis. The occasion was found in the formation, during the course of 1904, of the Irish Reform Association, in which Lord Dunraven was the moving spirit. The object of the Association was to advocate the addition, to the social and economic reforms of the Unionist Governments, of a measure of local autonomy. The motto of its programme was devolution; its aims were the devolution of Private Bills, and of any other Irish business that Parliament might devolve, on a new deliberative body to be constituted in Ireland, and the constitution of an Irish Financial Council to deal with the question of Irish financial relations with the rest of the United Kingdom. William O'Brien was ready to support the programme, and his readiness led to his final breach with the United Irish League; while on the other side Wyndham was generally regarded as favourable to the Reform Association. The body of Irish Unionists revolted; Wyndham was forced to resign. The plan of devolution was too moderate for a country where extreme opinions are the easiest to hold; and when the Conservative Government left office at the end of 1905, the moderates, whose approximation to one another seemed full of promise, had been beaten both in the United Irish League and in the Irish Unionist party.

The General Election at the beginning of 1906 seated a Liberal Government firmly in power. That Government was naturally in close touch with the Irish Nationalist party, now definitely led by John Redmond. Having been returned to power in 1906 by the votes of Unionists and Liberals alike, on the platform of Free Trade, it did not raise the issue of Home Rule during the life of the Parlia-

ment thus elected ; but it pursued a steady policy of conciliation. In 1908 the Irish Universities Act at last gave Ireland a proper system of university education, and created a National University in Dublin and a Queen's University in Belfast ; while, by the end of 1909, Irish was being taught in nearly 3,000 (in 1900 it was being taught in less than 100) of the 8,000 primary schools of Ireland. A number of measures were also taken with the object of improving the social and economic condition of Ireland. A Town Tenants' Act in 1906, though modified by the House of Lords from its original intentions, gave to urban tenants the protection against eviction, and the right of compensation for disturbance, which had before been conceded to rural tenants by the Act of 1870; and a Labourers' Act in the same year, strengthening and improving previous legislation, provided for loans to Irish District Councils for the purpose of erecting labourers' cottages, and for advances to labourers to aid them in acquiring plots of land. In 1907 an Evicted Tenants' Act (also modified by the Lords) was passed in order to accelerate the restoration of evicted tenants ; while the Land Act of 1909 made important changes in favour of Ireland in Wyndham's Act of 1903. Meanwhile, in 1908, the general institution of a scheme of old age pensions proved of great and especial benefit to Ireland. Thus occupied in educational and economic reform, the Government attempted little, and achieved less, by way of change in the methods of Irish Government. In 1907 an Irish Councils Bill was introduced, which followed, in the main, the lines of the programme of the Irish Reform Association. Its central feature was a central representative Council, composed of eighty-two elected and twenty-four nominated members, which was to exercise control over eight of the Irish administrative departments, including the Congested Districts Board, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and the two educational departments ; while a separate Irish Fund and an Irish Treasury were

other and consequential parts of the scheme. Received at first with qualified approval by the Irish Nationalist members, the scheme was subsequently rejected by the National Convention of the party and ultimately withdrawn. The policy of Home Rule by instalment was thus abandoned; and the Nationalist party pledged itself to accept nothing short of Home Rule.

The elections of 1910, fought on the question of the 'veto' of the House of Lords, resulted in the return of a Parliament in which Liberals and Unionists were almost exactly equal, and the balance was held by forty Labour members and eighty Nationalists. The situation which had been created by the General Election of 1885 had thus once more returned; and the same results followed. After the powers of the House of Lords had been cut short by the Parliament Act of 1911, with the aid of the Irish representatives, a Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1912, and in 1914, under the operation of the Parliament Act, it became a Statute. Its operation has been postponed; and the question of the future, which for a moment seemed likely to be solved this year, is how, and with what limitations, it can be brought into effect in the face of the opposition of Irish Unionism, and particularly of Protestant Ulster. The fact remains that Home Rule is now part of the law of the realm; and one result of the rebellion of 1916—a rebellion in part due to the postponement of the operation of the Home Rule Act in 1914, and the formation in 1915 of a coalition cabinet in which the Irish Unionist leader was included—was a growing recognition of that fact. And meanwhile it is true to say that among all the vicissitudes of politics the prosperity of Ireland has not ceased to grow. The rate of emigration has fallen. From 1881 to 1891 there were 750,000 Irish emigrants; from 1891 to 1901 there were 430,000; from 1901 to 1911 there were 330,000. Land purchase has steadily progressed. Up to March, 1911, £66,500,000 had been ad-

vanced for this purpose, which represented the purchase by Irish tenants of nearly 6,000,000 acres, or little short of one-third of the total area of Ireland ; while agreements for the purchase of another 4,500,000 acres, at a price of £46,500,000, were pending. By the middle of 1913 the sum of purchase-money for transactions fulfilled, or agreed upon, under the Acts of 1903 and 1909 was over £96,000,000: nearly £4,000,000 had been also advanced for labourers' cottages ; and a sum of £24,000,000 had in addition been used under the Acts for land purchase prior to 1903. The total sum thus expended was over £125,000,000 ; and it was estimated that £60,000,000 more would be needed to complete the whole programme. While the land was thus changing hands, it was also being used more productively. Ireland is pre-eminently a country of pasture, and not of tillage ; but by 1910 there were 2,370,000 acres under tillage—an increase of over 67,000 acres on the previous year. Finally the growth of Irish commerce has been, in the last few years, remarkably rapid. In 1904, the total estimated value of Irish exports and imports was £104,250,000 ; in 1913, it was £147,500,000. In 1913, the imports per head of the population of Ireland were £16 2*s.* 10*d.* and the exports £16 3*s.* 9*d.* In Denmark, a country in many respects parallel, the imports were £14 13*s.* 1*d.*, and the exports £11 16*s.* 10*d.*

II

THE IRISH CHURCH AND IRISH EDUCATION

In a speech in the House of Commons, in 1844, Disraeli sought to define the Irish question. 'One says it is a physical question; another a spiritual. Now it is the absence of the aristocracy; and now the absence of railways. It is the Pope one day and potatoes the next.' He attempted a definition of his own. 'A dense population in extreme distress inhabit an island where there is an Established Church which is not their Church, and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in a distant capital. Thus they have a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien Church, and in addition the weakest Executive in the world.' The last sentence of Disraeli's definition suggests three subjects for inquiry—the agrarian; the ecclesiastical, in connexion with which we may also consider the subject of education; and the political. To the second of these, as the simplest and the least controversial, we may address ourselves first.

By 1866 the old penal laws against Roman Catholics had long been dead. The Roman Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 had admitted Catholics to a seat in Parliament; and in 1838 the Irish Tithes Act had converted tithes into a rent-charge, payable by the landlord and not by the tenant, at the rate of seventy-five per cent. of the nominal value of the tithe. The Anglican Church in Ireland, in spite of these changes, remained none the less an anomaly. It was the Church of little more than ten per cent. of the nation, yet it was richly endowed, and its annual revenue amounted to more than £600,000, of which over £200,000 was drawn from the rent of estates. There were rich livings of about £1,000 a year whose incumbents had only

some two hundred Protestants in their parishes, while the Roman Catholic inhabitants numbered from six thousand to seven thousand ; there were livings of £200, and some of £400 per annum, whose incumbents had less than twenty Protestant parishioners. In 1869, Gladstone, in perhaps the most masterly of all the Acts which he introduced, at last disestablished and disendowed the Irish Church, though not without bitter opposition in Ireland, and not until after a severe struggle with the House of Lords in England. In virtue of the disestablishing clauses of the Act, Irish bishops ceased to sit in the House of Lords and ceased to be appointed by the Crown : the Irish Church became a self-governing Episcopal Church, which more and more inclined to a definitely ' Protestant ' attitude and ritual. By the remaining clauses of the Act a revolution was wrought in the finances of the Irish Church. The capital value of the property of the Church was computed at a sum of £16,000,000. About half of this sum was allocated for the future to the Episcopalian Church. A sum of three-quarters of a million was awarded to the Presbyterian Church, in lieu of the old *Regium Donum*, an annual grant from the State which dated back to the seventeenth century. Another sum of £370,000 was assigned, in lieu of the annual grant before paid by the Government, to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth, which had been established and endowed by Parliament in 1795, and whose annual grant had been increased by Peel in 1845. The residue—a sum of about £7,000,000—was set aside for the relief of public misfortune and suffering ; and it has been applied since 1869 mainly to that object, though it has also been used to support intermediate education and to constitute a fund for teachers' pensions. One of the provisions of the Irish Church Act enabled tenants of Church estates, with the aid of the State, which promised to advance part of the price, to purchase their holdings ; and by 1880, 6,000 out of a total of 8,500 tenants had purchased their farms. The provision

is noteworthy as the first step in the direction of Irish land purchase.

No provision was made by the Act of 1869 for the payment of Roman Catholic clergy. Early in the nineteenth century the British Government had proposed to undertake the payment of priests in return for a veto on the nomination of bishops. The proposal was viewed favourably by the Papacy, but it was disliked by the Irish bishops, and it was eventually dropped. The support given to Maynooth continued to be the only form of public endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. But if the Government has thus given little financial support, it has at any rate given absolute religious toleration. Whatever the religious animosities within Ireland itself, the British Government has been entirely impartial. 'The Catholic religion in Ireland', says a French writer with strong Catholic and Nationalist sympathies, 'is not interfered with either by legal restrictions or by police regulations; and in no country does the secular arm show more respect for religion and its ministers.' Priests have been free to exercise an influence in politics; and they have exercised no inconsiderable influence in the last fifty years, more especially in the troubled period from 1880 to 1890. The only action which has ever been attempted by the Government has taken the form of negotiations with Rome—negotiations based on the hope that the Papacy might be induced to exercise a moderating influence on the extreme forms of political activity adopted by some of the Irish clergy. In the most important of all spheres—that of education—the power of the Catholic clergy has been free from any check or limitation. There is in Ireland a large number of denominational primary schools, managed by religious orders such as that of the Christian Brothers, which are free from the control of the State. The public elementary schools, on the other hand, are nominally non-sectarian; and religious instruction

is given outside school hours, and separately to each denomination. But as a matter of fact the schools tend to be denominational in their management. In a Roman Catholic district the local priest is the manager ; and Irish schools have been defined by an Irish writer as ' secular institutions under clerical control '. This result is open to criticism on general grounds, but it cannot be said that the system interferes with the power of the clergy.

Irish education cannot be said to be disfigured by religious intolerance. It is sometimes said that it is vitiated by racial prejudice : English is the language of instruction, and the tone of instruction is English ; the history taught is English history, and the literature studied is that of England. It is true enough that the language of instruction, down to 1900, was almost entirely English. This was certainly not the result of any policy of repressing Erse. It was rather that Erse, before the days of the Gaelic League, was but little spoken and still less written. With the revival of Erse during the last twenty years, teaching both of Irish and in Irish has spread, until, as we have seen, the Irish language finds a place in three-eighths of the primary schools of Ireland. There was indeed a temporary set-back in 1905, when Walter Long, the Chief Secretary, stopped the fees for the teaching of Irish ; but his policy was reversed by the new Liberal Government in the next year. Far from being discouraged, the use of Irish is rather encouraged by the Government ; and additional grants, ranging from 3*s.* to 12*s.* per head, are paid to schools in which Irish is taught. That the tone and substance of teaching is in large measure English is a charge which may have some amount of justification. A text-book of history, with a definite Nationalist bias, was suppressed by the Irish educational authorities in 1908. But it should be remarked that the text-book was not only Nationalist, but also Roman Catholic in tone, and that it thus ran counter to the neutral non-sectarian

policy which the Government has always followed in Irish schools. It is safe to assert that education has never been used as the vehicle of any deliberate English propaganda[1]: and it is also safe to assert that as soon as there has been an adequate scientific study of Irish history—and that study has been too much neglected in Ireland—the subject of Irish history will find its place in the curriculum of Irish schools. The new University of Dublin has already made the Irish language a compulsory subject in its matriculation examination; and as soon as it encourages Irish history, the influence of its encouragement will be felt all over Ireland.

The most serious charge against Irish education is not that of national prejudice, but that of inefficiency. Primary education in Ireland has long been backward, though the same accusation might with equal truth be brought against primary education in England. National schools were established as long ago as 1831; but attendance is not compulsory except under local option, which has established it in three-quarters of the towns and one-half of the counties in Ireland. The teaching, it is said, has been somewhat mechanical, and adjusted to the attainment of 'results'; but that, again, might—at any rate until recently—have been said with almost equal truth of the teaching in English elementary schools. Of late years a new spirit has shown itself: attention has been directed to manual and practical instruction: and the spread of Irish has probably helped to give a new vitality to the schools. More serious than the problem of primary is that of secondary education. A Board for Intermediate Education was created in 1878, and vested with a capital of £1,000,000, drawn from the Irish Church Fund, from which

[1] It is said that, on the contrary, the Sinn Fein element has found entry into the schools, and that education has been made the vehicle of an anti-English propaganda by teachers with Sinn Fein sympathies.

it was empowered to make grants to secondary schools; but it has not achieved any considerable measure of success. The teachers are too often insufficiently equipped; and as the grants are proportioned to results, cramming is said to be rife. On the other hand, the work of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction has greatly strengthened the teaching of natural science and of technical subjects in all the secondary schools of Ireland since 1899. Experimental science and manual training have been introduced; and a system of inspection has eliminated, as far as these subjects are concerned, the evils of cramming. Ireland is to-day ahead of England in the art of linking the teaching of natural science with the economic life of the country, and of adjusting such teaching to its specific needs and character. New technical and commercial schools have been instituted: special training has been given in industries such as glove-making and wood-work; and, above all, a system of agricultural education has been organized, which is marked by a high degree of originality and vigour. There is the new and finely equipped Royal College of Science in Dublin: there is in each province a school of agriculture for farmers' sons: there are winter classes which they can attend in the slack time of the year; and there are the itinerant instructors of the Department, who are employed by the County Councils to lecture on agriculture and disseminate new ideas and methods. Meanwhile Parliament, by the Intermediate Education Act of 1914, has at last done something to improve the position of teachers in Irish secondary schools; and though there is much still to be done in the way of reform of secondary education in Ireland, it can at any rate be said that much has already been done which has still to be done in England.

In the University system of Ireland there was, until the Irish Universities Act of 1908, a number of grave defects. There was Trinity College, Dublin—but that could hardly

be said to belong to Nationalist Ireland; there was the Royal University of Ireland, created in 1879—but that was only an examining body, which tested candidates from the three Queen's Colleges of Belfast, Cork, and Galway (created in 1845), and from the Catholic University College of Dublin. It was a great step in advance when the Act of 1908 dissolved the Royal University, and created two new Universities—one in Belfast, which consisted of the old Queen's College of Belfast, remodelled and re-endowed; and one in Dublin, a federal body, containing the old Queen's Colleges of Cork and Galway, and a new Metropolitan College in Dublin itself. The reform, especially if it is supplemented in the future by a reform of Irish secondary education, may prove to have large and far-reaching consequences. The great need of Ireland is the formation of an enlightened and rational public opinion which can look at the many problems of the country, both economic and political, in the light not of inherited and partisan prejudice, but of critical understanding. 'Our chief obstacles', writes Sir Horace Plunkett, in tracing the beginnings of the I.A.O.S., 'arose from the lack of trained economic thought among all classes, and especially among those to whom the majority looked for guidance. It would be no libel upon the public opinion, upon which we sought to make an impression, to say that it really allowed no question to be discussed on its merits.' It is the inevitable legacy of the past, which in Ireland has been a steady accumulator of prejudices, that men should cut the facts to square with their traditions. It is the bounden duty of the future to create a mental atmosphere in which questions can be discussed on their merits. Here lies the great function of a University in national life; and here, too, is to be found the fundamental aim and object of all education. The free discourse of thought, following the windings of every subject, and seeking truth for the sake of truth—this is what in Ireland, and everywhere, is the only safe beginning, and the only true conclusion, of the whole matter.

III

THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM IN IRELAND

(1) *Irish Soil and its Cultivation*

BEFORE dealing with the history of land legislation in Ireland during the last fifty years, we must first of all seek to understand the nature of the Irish soil and the character of the legal relations between landlord and tenant which have been established on that soil. The soil of Ireland contains a little over 20,000,000 acres. Of these nearly 5,000,000 acres are waste bog and mountain. About 2,250,000 acres are meadow land; and 10,000,000 acres are devoted to permanent pasture. Ireland is thus marked out as pre-eminently a pastoral country.[1] The area under

[1] One must beware of thinking that all Ireland, or even the greater part of the soil of Ireland, is naturally and physically a pastoral country. Historically, Ireland is such a country; but as far as the nature of the soil goes, she might almost be said to be naturally designed for arable cultivation. Millions of acres of Irish soil are not naturally suited for pasture: the grazing is poor, and the land would do better under the plough. Some experts would even advocate the breaking up of all the pasture land in Ireland; but without going so far, one may say that it is generally agreed by Irish agriculturalists that most of the Irish pastures should be under tillage. It is the old tradition of pasture, and the greater ease of pasture farming, that keep so much of Ireland under grass.

It is instructive to compare Ireland and Scotland (two countries of almost equal extent) in respect of the area of arable cultivation. The statistics for the year 1914 show that Ireland had 1,250,000 acres under corn-crops, while Scotland had under 1,200,000; and that Ireland had over 1,000,000 acres under green crops, while Scotland had just over 600,000. On the other hand there is much more land in Scotland which is not suited for tillage than there is in Ireland.

tillage is small, and little over 2,250,000 acres ; and of this amount much consists of small holdings, whose occupiers only grow food for their own subsistence, and can only make ends meet by the aid of subsidiary occupations. Not only is Ireland a pastoral country ; it is a pastoral country occupied with the production not of milk, but of meat. It is a cattle-breeding country, which does not even, as yet, fatten the cattle it breeds, but exports them to England and Scotland to be fattened there for the market. Dairying is indeed an Irish industry, and under the stimulus of agricultural co-operation and the I.A.O.S. it has grown in recent years ; but Ireland remains, in the main, a grazing or ranching country, engaged in the export of young cattle to Great Britain. The amount of butter exported from Ireland in 1913 was one-seventh of the total amount imported into the United Kingdom : the amount of eggs one-fourth ; the amount of potatoes one-fifth. On the other hand, while the United Kingdom imported 15,000 head of cattle from the rest of the world, Ireland exported, mainly to the United Kingdom, 1,100,000.[1] But Ireland exports cattle and not meat. The Irish grazier does the simpler work : he does not attempt to supply the English market with meat. 14,500,000 cwt. of beef and mutton were imported into the United Kingdom in 1913. Only 36,000 cwt. were exported from Ireland.

Ireland is thus 'a land of permanent pasture'. This is not an anomaly, or an accident due to chance causes. It is largely due to the character of the climate and the genius of the people. 'Both climate and soil favour pasture-farming'; and in Ireland there has always been a steady tradition of cattle-breeding.[2] It is not only the

[1] It is to be remembered that the importation of foreign cattle into the United Kingdom 'on foot' is prohibited. Ireland thus enjoys a practical monopoly of the cattle-trade with Great Britain.

[2] In the seventeenth century, according to Sir W. Petty, there

business of professional graziers: 'the good meadows of the West are often let to the village shop-keeper, the solicitor, or the doctor—even the clergyman himself does not scorn sometimes to increase his scanty income by this means'—that is to say, by cattle speculation. Tillage was not killed in Ireland by the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846; it was never rooted there. What happened in 1846 was indeed of crucial importance for Ireland; and it is important to realize exactly what it was. We must take our start—for here lies the *fons et origo*, which is too often disregarded—from the statistics of Irish population. In 1801 Ireland had a population of 5,400,000, or 166 to the square mile; England and Wales had a population of 9,000,000, or 153 to the square mile. This is a striking fact, when we remember that Ireland had not the great industries and the large towns which England had already developed during the industrial revolution. In 1841, Ireland had a population of 8,200,000, or 252 to the square mile; England and Wales had a population of 16,000,000, or 273 to the square mile. When we reflect on the paucity of Irish industry, it is obvious that an enormous burden had been placed on the soil of Ireland. It had to feed in 1841 nearly 3,000,000 more inhabitants than it had fed in 1801. Only a great and rapid increase in agricultural skill and methods could have solved this problem. There was no such increase. There was indeed an increased resort to tillage. But the methods of tillage were poor: there was little if any rotation of crops, or application of manures; and tillage itself was contrary to the traditions of Ireland. The result was inevitable. When, in 1845, there came

were 11,000,000 acres of pasture to 800,000 of arable. On the other hand the arable land was estimated in 1860 at nearly 4,500,000 acres, whereas in the twentieth century it is less than 2,500,000; and it is said that 81 per cent. of the land now under pasture in Ireland (as compared with 53 per cent. in England, 68 per cent. in Wales, and 28 per cent. in Scotland) could be used for arable cultivation.

a dearth in the staple crop—potatoes—it meant a cataclysm.

So far we can only attach blame to natural causes, which it is futile to blame.[1] A great increase of population, unaccompanied by a great increase in production, can only entail one result. That result is famine. The famine came, and three-quarters of a million of men, women, and children perished. Even so, the population was more than the land could nourish: and emigration, which in five years carried away 1,250,000 of the population, and in the next ten years 1,000,000, was the natural result. A further result was a reaction from tillage to pasture. The famine led landlords to consolidate holdings, and to let the consolidated holdings as grazing farms. Such a movement from tillage to pasture is always productive of misery. The 'enclosures' made in England during the sixteenth century produced widespread misery in England: the 'clearances' made in Ireland after 1846 produced acute suffering in Ireland. An instructive parallel might indeed be drawn between the Tudor enclosures and the Irish clearances. In both cases the object was the acquisition of land for grazing; in both cases the means was too often eviction; in both cases one of the results was a diminution of the labour required for the land. In the sixteenth century Sir Thomas More complained that sheep ate men: in the nineteenth century an Irishman might have complained that cattle ate men. But there is one great difference between the two cases. The Enclosure movement in England lasted intermittently for the best part of two centuries, from the middle of the fifteenth century till the

[1] But we must remember the past policy of England, which down to 1780 had sought to stop the development of Irish industry. The restrictive Acts had been gone, in 1846, for over sixty years; but their consequences still remained in the backwardness of Irish industry. If Irish industry had been flourishing, it would have provided occupation and subsistence for the growing population of Ireland.

middle of the seventeenth : the clearances in Ireland were packed into a few years. Between 1849 and 1856 50,000 families were evicted. In 1841 there were 310,000 holdings of five acres and less, and they amounted to 45 per cent. of the total number of holdings ; in 1851, there were 88,000, and they amounted to 15 per cent. In 1841 again, there were 48,500 holdings of thirty acres and upwards, and they amounted to 7 per cent. of the total number ; in 1851 there were 150,000, and they amounted to 26 per cent. A French writer speaks of the clearances as, 'judged by the results that still remain, . . . the greatest legalized crime that humanity has ever accomplished against humanity'. These are extreme words. The clearances are not unique in history, except for their concentration in a short period. And the economic tendency from which they sprang is one which is still at work. Grazing farms are still the order of the day in Ireland. The peasantry still demand the turning of pasture into arable, and back their demand by 'cattle-driving' and boycotts, just as the English peasants of the sixteenth century long continued to demand reversion from sheep farming to arable husbandry, and to back their demands by riots and risings against enclosures.

As far as the land itself is concerned, Ireland is thus a country of grass farming, with a tendency towards large holdings. Of 20,000,000 acres about 12,500,000 lie in holdings of over 50 acres, 8,200,000 of these in holdings of over 100 acres, and nearly 2,000,000 of these in holdings of over 500 acres. At the same time, particularly in the West, there is a large number of small holdings. About four and three-quarter millions of acres are in holdings of less than 30 acres, and of these one and three-quarter millions are in holdings of less than 15 acres. While 88,000 farmers occupy twelve and a half million acres in holdings of over 50 acres, nearly 400,000 occupy four and three-quarter million acres in holdings of less than 30 acres. It

is the worst of these small holdings that they are mostly on bad soil. A large number, in consequence, are definitely ' deficit ' or uneconomic holdings : they are too small and too poor to afford the means of subsistence. It is difficult to fix the minimum size of an economic holding in Ireland. Some would say 15 acres ; some would say 30 ; some would say from 20 to 40. But on a modest computation there are some 200,000 holdings which are deficit or uneconomic. These holdings are chiefly to be found in what are called the ' Congested Districts ', which embrace a considerable part of Western Ireland. These districts are not congested in the sense that they are overpopulated. On the contrary, they are often bare and lonely. They are congested in the sense that they are sown more thickly than other districts with uneconomic holdings.

(2) *Irish Landlords and Irish Tenants before* 1870

We have now to consider the legal relations between landlord and tenant which have been established in the past on Irish soil. If we look back to ultimate origins in the past, we may trace two separate currents of conceptions with regard to Irish land, currents which have met but never quite blended. One is the old Irish conception, according to which land belonged to the clan or sept, subject to the right of its chief (or Tanist) to receive certain dues from his clansmen ; the other is the feudal conception imported from England, by which the land belonged, as his private property, to a landlord who let it in tenancies and demanded service or rent in return. English lawyers, who have made the same mistake in other countries where English Government has had to deal with similar questions, erroneously detected a feudal landlord in the chief of the Irish sept ; and when a chief committed political transgression, punishable under the rules of feudal law by forfeiture of land, they enforced

these rules. Once the land was forfeited to the Crown, new landlords had to be found, and so arose the 'plantations' which took place in the century between 1552 and 1654, and by which landlords who came from England were vested with Irish soil. The process began under Mary Tudor (1552–8) and was completed by the Cromwellian Settlement (1652–4). Under Elizabeth nearly 300,000 acres were confiscated; under James I over 3,000,000; while under Cromwell about 11,000,000 acres changed their owners, and the native Irish were sentenced (though they were not eventually sent) to Connaught and Clare, which are still to-day the homes of the 'Congested Districts'.

In the eighteenth century the penal laws protected this settlement. Roman Catholics were prohibited from buying land: if they took it on lease, it must be for a term of less than thirty years, and at a rent of not less than the value of two-thirds of the produce. But the system thus created and protected did not flourish. Many of the landlords were absentees; and there was no living connexion between them and their tenants. Often again they let their lands (sometimes even in perpetuity) to middlemen, who naturally tended to make the most of a position which gave them the chance of profit without the onus of responsibility. Their estates, too, were often entailed, and they were thus limited in their control of their own property: they were often heavily mortgaged, and the landlord was thus only the nominal owner of his own property. These causes, coupled with the small size and the great number of the tenants' holdings, prevented Irish landlords from doing what English landlords have always done—erecting the buildings and making the necessary improvements on the holdings of their tenants. What the Irish landlords let to their tenants was only bare soil; and it was left to the tenants to make all the improvements which were necessary for its cultivation. There thus arose a sort

of co-partnership : the landlord found the land and the tenant found the improvements. But this co-partnership did not—except in Ulster, where the custom of Ulster Tenant Right prevailed—involve the legal consequences which might seem logically to follow. There was no dual ownership : and the tenant had no legal property in the improvements he had made. Irish tenants generally held by yearly tenancies, terminable at six months' notice. If a notice to quit were served, the tenant was *ad misericordiam domini*. He might quit, or in other words, be evicted ; and in that case his improvement reverted to the landlord. He might be allowed to stay ; and in that case his rent would probably be raised in view of the increased value which his own improvements had given to his holding.

All this was the result not of any deliberate policy of oppression, but of the prevalence of English law in a country where English conditions did not hold good. In the issue neither landlord nor tenant benefited. The landlord, in spite of high rents—which were not always paid, because it was impossible to pay them—was often practically insolvent. The tenants had no fixity of tenure ; they had no security for a fair rent ; they had no freedom to sell their improvements. They felt (remembering, perhaps, at the back of their minds, old days of tribal ownership) that there was such a thing as tenant right : they felt that they had a right to the ' three F's ' ; but they were destitute of all three. To realize their position we must remember that they had no chance of any alternative occupation. There was practically no industry ; it was a case of land or nothing. The relation of landlord and tenant thus became a struggle, it has been said, ' between a primary need and a monopoly '. Land-hunger prevailed, and land-hunger produced its consequences. Under these conditions the lot of the Irish tenant was in some respects worse than that of a mediaeval serf. If he was not tied

to the soil, he would often have been glad to be tied ; if he was free to go, he was also liable to be evicted.

The whole system was all the worse owing to the multiplicity of small holdings, which indeed was one of the main causes of trouble. They helped to prevent the landlord from making improvements ; they were so small that anybody could farm them, and everybody scrambled to get them. Before 1846, it is said, there was a number of holdings of one-quarter or one-half of an acre ; and they were rented at a rate of ten guineas an acre. It is difficult to allocate responsibility, just as it is difficult to find the beginning or end of a rope that seems inextricably knotted. On the one hand it was the scramble of tenants for land that led landlords to charge high rents. These were the days of *laissez faire* and belief in the efficacy of competition ; and landlords could not understand why they should not let their land to the highest bidder in the market. They forgot, as we shall see that statesmen also forgot, that land is a commodity *sui generis* ; they forgot, again, that *noblesse oblige*, and that, as Under-Secretary Drummond reminded them in a famous phrase in 1838, ' property has its duties as well as its rights '. On the other hand, it is perhaps fair to remark that small holdings may be made to pay, and that Irish farmers did not make them pay. ' Their agricultural methods ', says Dr. Bonn, ' were so primitive that they were in many ways detrimental to the fruitfulness of the soil.' A crop of potatoes and a crop of oats—this was all that was generally grown ; and there was no attempt at intensive cultivation. Such an attempt could, indeed, hardly be expected in a country where there was no market for agricultural produce and no agricultural tradition, and where holdings were often scattered, and ' entangled in those of the next-door neighbour so as to render cultivation as inconvenient as possible '. Yet it is fair to remark that the whole system of Irish farming previous to 1846 would have been radically

improved, if a system of manuring, and especially of regular rotation of crops, could have been introduced. The turnip especially would have wrought a revolution. That is why Dr. Bonn says that, since 'a denser population is impossible without agriculture, and intensive agriculture can scarcely be pursued without turnips, the Irish question is ultimately a "turnip question".'[1]

During and after the crisis of 1846 a drastic cautery was applied to the agrarian malady of Ireland, partly by famine, partly by emigration, and partly by eviction. Rents still rose, and continued to rise down to 1870. This was partly due to, and to that extent justified by, a considerable rise of prices; it was in part due to the growing consolidation of holdings, which rendered the competition for the small holdings that remained all the keener; it was to some extent due to the sums which were sent to Ireland by emigrants who had prospered in America, and which went to swell the effective demand for land. The action of the legislature during this period (1846–70) produced no serious changes for the better; indeed, it produced a number of changes for the worse; but it began to undergo a significant modification. Between 1816 and 1843 Parliament had passed some thirty Acts in favour of landlords; it had refused, and it continued till nearly 1870 to refuse, to pass the many Bills which were proposed in favour of tenants. But between 1846 and 1870 it attempted, at any rate, to hold the balance even. If there was as yet no disposition to favour the tenant, such as we may trace after 1870 there was on the other hand no disposition to favour the landlord. The general idea prevalent at the time was that of free contract; and Parliament hoped to

[1] Dr. Bonn's phrase is clever; but it is perhaps misleading. It is not so much the turnip crop, as green crops of all kinds, that matter. Nor is Ireland destitute of turnips. The area in Ireland under turnips, mangel-wurzel and beet to-day is 350,000 acres. In Scotland to-day the area is 430,000 acres.

introduce peace into Ireland by a thorough application of that idea. The contract of sale had been made almost impossible for landlords by the complications of their titles. Many of them, especially after the famine, which hit a number of landlords hard, were bankrupt ; and the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 was an attempt to permit them to realize their assets. Unfortunately the Act, which resulted in the sale of estates to the value of £50,000,000 in the next thirty years, only made the position of the tenants worse. It was expected that it would result in the importation into Ireland of new capital, which would renew the face of the land. What it actually did was to put the land in the hands of business men, and too often of jobbers and speculators, who sought to extract the maximum of return from their investment.

As the Act of 1849 had sought to ensure to the landlord the chance of a free contract of sale, so an Act of 1860, generally known as Deasy's Act, sought to introduce the methods of a free contract of hiring and letting into the relations between landlord and tenant. It substituted for old customary tenures a law of contract which assimilated the hire of land to ' the chartering of a ship or the hiring of a street cab '. The difficulty of such a policy is to-day obvious. ' As between the landlord and the majority of the tenants, there was not, nor could be, any freedom of contract.' The tenant was not in a position to bargain, and the contract was inevitably one-sided. The Act, in fact, facilitated eviction, to which resort could readily be had for alleged breach of contract. Another Act of the same year—the Landed Property Improvement Act—was no more successful. It recognized indeed (and this recognition was to be carried much farther in the future) that tenants had a right to compensation for the improvements which they might in the future effect with the consent of their landlords ; but as landlords were certain to refuse consent, and the Act made no provision against their

refusal, the recognition was nugatory. Both the Acts of 1860 failed, and they failed for the same reason. These were the days of Palmerston, and Palmerston thought that tenants' right was landlords' wrong. Statesmen had not yet recognized the existence of that virtual co-partnership under which the landlord supplied the soil, and the tenant the improvements; yet it had long been an inherent characteristic of Irish land-tenure, and it made contractual rules about letting and hiring, or contractual rules about future improvements, entirely inapplicable.

(3) *Liberal Land Legislation from* 1870 *to* 1885

The problem of the land was still a problem when Gladstone came into office in 1868. Dispossession, as Sir Horace Plunkett says, was still nine points of the law for Irish tenants. 'What was chiefly required for agrarian peace was a recognition of that sense of partnership in the land—a relic of the tribal days—to which the Irish mind tenaciously adhered.' That recognition Gladstone gave: at first, in 1870, somewhat scantily and indirectly; afterwards, in 1881, more liberally and more directly. The Act of 1870 sought to stop eviction by the indirect method of making it costly for the landlord. If he arbitrarily dispossessed his tenant, and thereby dissolved a virtual co-partnership, he was bound to pay for the dissolution, and the tenant had a right to be compensated for the 'disturbance' he suffered. Further, if a tenant voluntarily left his holding, he was to be entitled, on leaving, to compensation for any improvements he had made. Finally, by the Bright clauses, tenants on encumbered estates which came into the market under the Act of 1849 were given facilities for the purchase of their holdings. The Act of 1870 thus recognized two different principles—the principle of partnership between landlord and tenant (or tenant right), and the principle of land purchase, or, in other words, of the substitution of peasant proprietorship

in lieu of tenancy. But the recognition was inadequate in either case. The Bright clauses proved insufficient to achieve their objects ; and the recognition of tenant right was almost equally ineffective. In the first place tenants were only protected by the Act provided that their rents were not in arrear. In the second place the amount of compensation given for ' disturbance ' was not enough to debar landlords from evictions. In the third place, while the Act attempted to give fixity of tenure—not directly, but by the indirect method of debarring landlords from eviction—it failed to make any provision for fair rents, and fixity of tenure without fair rents was a dubious boon to Irish tenants. As a matter of fact, rents continued to rise for some years after the Act. Agricultural prices were rising ; and farmers preferred to pay increased rents rather than suffer eviction and receive an inadequate compensation for disturbance.

Affairs might continue in this train as long as agriculture was prosperous. After 1878, as we noticed before, it ceased to be prosperous. Another famine, like that of 1846, was narrowly averted, and an era of agricultural depression began. At this juncture Irish discontent took a ' New Departure ' ; and some of the members of the old Fenian party, as we have seen, guided by Michael Davitt, allied themselves with Parnell in the Land League for agrarian agitation. Boycott became the order of the day ; and new tenants who took at an increased rent holdings from which the old tenants had been evicted were subjected to its rigours. It was in this position of affairs that Gladstone passed the Land Act of 1881. By this Act the principle of partnership or tenant right was accepted in its entirety, and its three articles—Fixity of Tenure, Fair Rent, and Freedom of the tenant to sell his share of the holding, including improvements and the rest of his interest—were definitely endorsed. The Act thus banished into limbo English economic notions of contract ;

it relegated political economy to Saturn—but as political economy of the English sort had never held good in Ireland, its relegation was hardly an error. A régime of status, or something like status, was introduced in place of contract. A Land Commission was created to fix fair rents for a period of fifteen years ; and at the end of this period these judicial rents were to be subject to revision and a further determination for another like period. In this way fixity of tenure and fair rents were both recognized ; and the third article of tenant right was guaranteed by a provision granting the tenant (subject to a certain right of veto on the part of the landlord) the power of selling his interest in his holding. Thus Ulster Tenant Right, which had already been recognized by the Act of 1870 as the law in Ulster (where before it had only been a customary rule), and part of which had been recognized by the same Act as the general law of Ireland, was now definitely extended, as a whole, to the country at large. By other clauses of the Act of 1881 land purchase, which had been facilitated in 1870, was made still easier ; and thus the Act of 1881, like that of 1870, contained a recognition of two different principles. What it failed to do was to extend the benefit of judicial rents to tenants whose rents were in arrears ; but by an Arrears Act of 1882, by which arrears of rent were extinguished on the payment of a full year's rent by the tenant (to which the State added a grant equal to another year's rent), this omission was remedied.

The Act of 1881 has often been called the Magna Carta of Irish tenants. It has also been called an experiment in State Socialism. It substituted, or sought to substitute, protection and status for competition and contract ; it gave the tenant security of tenure, under the aegis of the State, at a rent fixed by a State Court. Rents were largely reduced in the following years ; the average reduction for the first quindecennial period was over twenty per cent., and for the second it was almost exactly the same in amount.

But the Act did not prove final. For one thing, it had been introduced on a falling market, when rents were far from steady ; and a difficult problem ensued. What was a fair rent, and on what basis of principle could it be fixed by the Land Commission ? Landlords complained that the State cut down their rents with no compensation, and with no justification in the state of the market ; tenants on the other hand complained that their rents were not sufficiently reduced, and that the Land Court was biased against them. In truth the State had undertaken to solve, by judicial determination, a problem which competition might roughly solve, but human ingenuity hardly could. Nor was this all. The provision for the free sale of the tenant's interest simply meant that competition was transferred from the area of rent to the area of tenant right ; and the prices which outgoing tenants charged, and incoming tenants paid, for the tenant's interest in the soil sometimes amounted to ten or twenty times the amount of the rent. Again, landlords began to pay still less attention to their estates when they ceased to have any voice in the determination of their rents ; and tenants on their side were chary of making improvements on their holdings when improvements might result in a raising of rents at the next revision. A system of *condominium* over the soil proved in the issue almost impossible ; and men turned to another solution, which would vest *dominium* in a single owner and make the tenant his own landlord.

But before we attempt to trace the history of the adoption of this solution, we must first deal with the history of the system introduced by Gladstone in 1881 and extended in 1882. The first serious modification of that system—a modification to the further detriment of the landlord—was introduced in 1887, and it was introduced by a Conservative Government. Lord Salisbury, who during his first tenure of office in 1885 had passed, as we shall see, a Land Purchase Act of great importance,

had now come back to a second tenure of office after the failure of the first Home Rule Bill. He was confronted by a new agrarian agitation, based on the 'Plan of Campaign', before described, by which tenants were to offer to their landlords what they considered a fair rent, and, if the landlords refused it, to pay the sum into the war-chest of the National League. The fact was that agricultural prices were falling; the potato crop of 1886 had failed; and the Irish party demanded a modification of the Act of 1881 and a further reduction of rents. Lord Salisbury at first refused to yield to agitation; but in 1887 he succumbed, and passed an Act which, in the first place, extended to leaseholders the right to 'fair' or judicial rents (the Act of 1881 had only related to yearly tenants), and in the second place empowered the Land Commission to lower, in accordance with the fall in prices, the judicial rents which had been actually fixed, under the Act of 1881, down to the year 1885. Those rents had, of course, been fixed for a period of fifteen years; but what Parliament had done, Parliament could undo; and within six years of the passing of the Act of 1881—within *two* years of the fixing of those rents which had been fixed in 1885—Irish landlords had to accept a further reduction of rents. A further extension came in 1891, when holders in perpetuity were enabled to have the benefits of judicial rents, if the landlord refused to accept a redemption of the rent-charge; and in 1896, at the end of the first quindecennial period after the Act of 1881, a Consolidating Act ratified and confirmed the whole system. By the end of the nineteenth century 10,000,000 acres of Irish soil were under a régime of judicial rents; and rents had been reduced, if we include the reductions during the second quindecennial period, by an average of nearly forty per cent. Not all Irish tenants, indeed, have enjoyed the benefits of judicially reduced rents. Town tenants (though protected by the Act of 1906 against eviction, and endowed with the right of compensation for 'disturbance') are outside the Act of 1881.

Tenants who hold large grazing farms, or who hire grazing lands for a period of less than one year (eleven months is a common term in Ireland) are outside the Act. Tenants who have fallen into arrears with their rents, and who have been technically evicted, but are actually left on their holdings as 'caretakers' (and the number of these is not inconsiderable), are also outside the Act. None the less, the system of judicial rents has helped to bring peace to Ireland. Evictions, and their accompaniment of agrarian crime, have been largely reduced. But if a period should ever come in which judicial rents, instead of being steadily lowered, had to be increased to meet a rise of prices, the peace might become a storm.

(4) *The History of Land Purchase*

We may now turn to consider the gradual adoption of a system of land purchase in Ireland during the last fifty years—a system at first concomitant with, but now tending to displace, the system of judicial rents. Land purchase, and the institution through land purchase of a system of peasant property, was first advocated by Bright, as early as 1866. It was first actually attempted, under his influence, in the Irish Church Act of 1869. By that Act tenants of Church lands were given the refusal of their holdings, and, if they consented to purchase, they were allowed to leave three-quarters of the purchase-money on mortgage at a rate of 4 per cent. Six thousand out of a total of 8,500 tenants bought their holdings; and the money advanced by Government to help the sale amounted to £1,675,000. Under the Land Act of 1870 tenants of encumbered estates, which came into the market under the Act of 1849, were enabled to borrow two-thirds of the price of their holdings from the Board of Works, provided that they repaid the advance in thirty-five annual instalments at the rate of 5 per cent.—a rate which included, of course, both interest on the loan and a sinking fund for its

extinction. Less than 900 tenants bought their holdings, and little more than £500,000 was advanced. By the Act of 1881 the Land Commission was authorized to advance, on the same conditions as those fixed in 1870, as much as three-quarters of the purchase-money to tenants who desired to buy their holdings. Only 731 tenants became purchasers, and less than a quarter of a million was advanced. At first, therefore, land purchase had achieved but little success. But it was soon to make rapid strides. A Bill introduced by the Liberal Government in 1884, by which a sum of £20,000,000 was to be advanced for land purchase, came to nothing; but during Lord Salisbury's first Government, in 1885, a Land Purchase Bill—generally called, from the name of its author, the Ashbourne Act—became law. By this Act the policy of Land Purchase, to which the Liberal Party had gradually been moving, was definitely adopted by the Conservative side. That policy, common henceforth to both English parties, was obviously destined to play a great part in shaping the future of Ireland. Indeed, if Gladstone had carried his first Home Rule Bill, a general and sweeping scheme of Land Purchase, which he intended to introduce as its concomitant, would have been carried in 1886, and Wyndham's Act would have been anticipated by nearly twenty years.

By the Ashbourne Act the Imperial Treasury was pledged to advance a sum of £5,000,000 in aid of land purchase. Tenants to whom their landlords were willing to sell their holdings were to be lent (no longer a part, but) the whole of the purchase-money, subject to certain guarantees; and the loan was to be repaid in forty-nine annual payments at a rate of 4 per cent. By a supplementary Act passed in 1888 the Treasury was authorized to advance an additional £5,000,000. Under the two Acts of 1885 and 1888 £10,000,000 was thus spent; and 25,000 tenants bought their holdings. A curious result began to

emerge, which made the policy of land purchase more than ever inevitable. The annuities payable by tenants under the Land Purchase Act were actually less than the old rents. The prices paid by purchasers were generally low. Land was sold, on an average, at seventeen and a half years' purchase; and thus purchasers, who at the end of fifty years would be owners, were meanwhile paying less in annuities than tenants on neighbouring land were paying in rent. Under these conditions the policy of land purchase inevitably moved down an inclined plane; it acquired momentum as it went; and the more was done the more had to be done. For a time, indeed (intentionally or unintentionally), a check was imposed. An Act of 1891 (which was due to Arthur Balfour, and which, we may incidentally notice, attempted for the first time to deal with the problem of the 'congested districts') provided for the appropriation of a sum of £33,000,000 in aid of land purchase; but it imposed conditions which made its operation complicated and ineffective. Instead of being paid in cash by the purchaser, the landlord was to receive payment from the State in 2¾ per cent. stock; while if the annuity payable by the tenant (which was still to be paid for forty-nine years at a rate of 4 per cent.) fell short of the old rent by more than 20 per cent., it was to be increased till it was equal to 80 per cent. of the old rent. Land purchase did not flourish under these conditions; and in 1896 a new Act was passed, of which the author was Gerald Balfour, in order to provide a better inducement to purchasers. The term for the payment of annuities was reduced to forty-two years, and provision was also made for a system of 'decadal reduction'. Under this system—which involved, for those who adopted it, the extension of the term for payments from forty-two to seventy years—the annuity payable was reduced every ten years; and the purchaser paid his 4 per cent. for the next ten years, not on the original purchase-money, but on a sum equal to the difference between the original

purchase-money and the sum already paid in annuities.[1] The result of the two Acts of 1891 and 1896 was perhaps not so large as might have been expected ; but it was considerable. Over £13,500,000 was advanced to purchasers, and the number of purchasers was over 46,000.

At the end of the nineteenth century the current thus seemed to be definitely setting towards the purchase by Irish tenants of the whole of Irish soil. Those who had already become purchasers were being aided in the management of their farms by the I.A.O.S., now ten years old, and by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, which had just been newly founded. They had every incentive to farm well, for the profits of good farming would go to themselves ; and if, for many years to come, they had annuities to pay to the State, those annuities were less than the old rents, they could easily be paid, and they were, as a matter of fact, with very few exceptions, duly paid. Those tenants who had not yet purchased their holdings were eager to do so, not so much because they were fascinated by the magic of property, but for the more sober reason, which throughout has been the motive force of Irish land purchase, that their annual payments would be less than if they continued to pay rent. The one difficulty—and it was serious—was that landlords were beginning to be unwilling to sell. Since 1891 they had been paid in stock, and the price of stock was falling rapidly. As the landlords showed themselves unwilling to sell, a demand arose for compulsion. The United Irish League had just been formed by William O'Brien, and, beginning in agitation against the large grazing farms and the congestion they caused, it proceeded to an agitation for compulsory expropriation of the owners of

[1] But from the fourth decennial period onwards the annuity was calculated on the sum remaining payable at the beginning of that period, and was not further reduced for the remainder of the period of seventy years.

these farms and the division of their property among the tenants of deficit holdings. Once started, the agitation soon swelled into a demand for compulsory expropriation of landlords in general; and the demand seemed all the more dangerous, when it was found that the tenants of Ulster, of whom T. W. Russell was one of the leaders, were united with the rest of Ireland in its advocacy. Fortunately, however, the more moderate among the landlords joined hands with the more moderate among the representatives of the tenants: a joint conference was held at the end of 1902, in which representatives of the landlords such as Lord Dunraven and Lord Mayo met William O'Brien and T. W. Russell, and an agreed programme—the 'Dunraven Treaty'—was the outcome. The gist of the programme was that new inducements should be given to landlords to sell their estates, and a general scheme of land purchase, equally advantageous to landlord and tenant, should be introduced. It was to this programme that the Wyndham Act of 1903 sought to give effect.

By this Act a sum of £100,000,000, to be raised by a gradual issue of stock by the British Government, was to be advanced to Irish tenants for the purchase of their holdings. It was expected that this sum would be adequate for the completion of land purchase. In order to hasten that completion, several changes were introduced. The most important of these were financial. Landlords were to be paid in cash, and not in stock; and they were also to receive a bonus at the rate of 12 per cent. of the purchase-money, so that an estate sold at a price of £5,000 would bring the landlord a sum of £5,600. An inducement was thus given to landlords to sell; and the tenants were encouraged to buy by a reduction of the rate of annuities from 4 per cent., at which it had stood under the old Acts, to 3¼ per cent. On the other hand, the period of repayment was extended from forty-two years—the period fixed by the Act of 1896—to sixty-eight and a half; and the

system of ' decadal reductions ', introduced in the Act of 1896, was dropped. In addition to these financial changes certain administrative changes were also made with the object of facilitating land purchase. Hitherto the authority for the administration of the system had been the Land Commission, originally created under the Act of 1881 for fixing judicial rents ; and the Land Commission, before giving its consent to any agreement for purchase, had been compelled to satisfy itself that the proposed agreement was financially sound, and adequate for the satisfaction of the various interests involved. In 1903 a new body—the Estates Commissioners—was created within the Land Commission for the administration of the system of land purchase ; and this body was now to give its consent automatically to any agreement for land purchase, provided that the price covenanted between the landlord and tenant fell within certain ' zones '. These zones varied according as the land to be purchased was rented, at the time of sale, at a rent judicially fixed for the first quindecennial period, or at a rent fixed for the second. In the latter case, the price for purchase would fall within the zones if the annuity payable by the purchasing tenant was not less than 10 per cent. and not more than 30 per cent. below his old rent ; in the former case, the price would fall within the zones, if the annuity payable was not less than 20 per cent. and not more than 40 per cent. below the former rent. The erection of a special authority for land purchase, and the creation of a system of zones within which purchases could be freely and automatically effected, were both favourable to the increase of sales ; and this increase was still further encouraged by two other provisions. By the first of these, whole estates must necessarily be sold *en bloc* ; by the second, a landlord was empowered to sell an estate, even if it were entailed or its title were otherwise complicated, provided that he had been in receipt of rent from it for the six years preceding the sale. Finally the Act not only dealt with land pur-

chase, or with tenants who were legally in a position to purchase their holdings; it also dealt with two other problems—that of evicted tenants, and that of congested districts. The Estates Commissioners were authorized to advance money to evicted tenants for the purchase either of their old holdings, or of untenanted land or other estates which came into the market. They were further empowered to buy directly 'congested estates' and untenanted land, in order to resettle, and to augment to an economic size, deficit holdings in districts with which the Congested Districts Board of 1891 was unable to deal.[1]

The Act was immediately successful in giving an impetus to land purchase. Year by year advances were made (the Act limited the advances to be made in any one year to a sum of £5,000,000), and year by year tenants bought their holdings. The Irish party was practically committed to the Act: Redmond as well as O'Brien had been a party to the Dunraven treaty; and the Act thus began its operation under favourable auspices. But criticism soon began to arise. It was difficult to expedite the process of purchase. The annual advances were limited; and the mass of proposed agreements was considerable. The system of zones was condemned by many of the Irish leaders, on the ground that it inflated the prices paid to the landlords. While the prices paid under the old Acts had only averaged seventeen and a half years' purchase, the *minimum*[2] under the Act of 1903 was eighteen and a

[1] The Congested Districts Board was limited, by a definition contained in the Act of 1891, to certain districts. As we shall see later, this definition prevented it from dealing with a number of districts which were really congested, though they did not come under the technical definition of congestion.

[2] That is to say, for estates which could be automatically sold and bought, without any interference by the Land Commission. For estates bought and sold subject to the consent of the Commission (in other words, for estates whose purchase did not fall within the system of zones) a lower price might be asked and paid.

half years' purchase for holdings rented at a rent fixed for the first quindecennial period, and twenty-one and a half years' for holdings rented at second-term rents: and the average was almost twenty-three years' purchase. Again, it was urged that purchasers, who had to pay $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on an originally high price for a term of sixty-eight and a half years, without any such possibility of a reduction as the Act of 1896 gave, might find themselves hard pressed in lean years to pay their annuities. More serious was the criticism of the finance of the Act. Here real and grave defects showed themselves. It was soon found that the original sum of £1,000,000 would be inadequate for the completion of land purchase. Prices ruled high, and not only so, but the stock which the Government floated in order to make the advances to the purchasers was sold at a heavy discount; and £113 5s. of stock had to be issued in order to get £100 of cash. This was the more serious since under the Act of 1903 the loss on flotation fell ultimately on Irish ratepayers. The Irish complained that though advances might be made to Irish tenants on British security, every penny had ultimately to be paid by Ireland, and they urged that it was unfair for Irish taxpayers to be mulcted, because British loans could only be floated at a serious loss.

In effect, the inducements by which the Act sought to promote land purchase had been only too generous. Landlords received higher prices and a bonus in addition, while the stock which had to be floated in order to pay the prices and the bonus was steadily falling. A financial break-down seemed imminent in 1907. It was another grievance that the clauses of the Act concerned with the restoration of evicted tenants and the problem of the congested districts were not put into operation speedily or effectively; and this led to a recrudescence of agrarian trouble in 1907. Cattle-driving was the form which the agitation took; it was countenanced by some of the Irish

Members of Parliament; and its object was to prevent graziers from renting land on short tenancies, and to secure the land for small farmers. The new Liberal Government, which had come into power at the end of 1905, took measures to meet the situation. An Evicted Tenants Bill of 1907 enabled the Estates Commissioners to purchase—compulsorily, in case of need—the land needed for the settlement of evicted tenants; and the Bill, though modified by the House of Lords, ultimately became law. More important was the Irish Land Act of 1909, by which an attempt was made to grapple with the financial difficulties which had hindered, and threatened to destroy, the working of the Act of 1903. By this Act a number of financial changes were made, partly with regard to future agreements, and partly with regard to purchase agreements already proposed and still pending. For the future landlords were to be paid in stock instead of cash, and the bonus, though it was still to be in cash, was no longer to be at a uniform rate of 12 per cent., but to vary with the price received, so that the higher the price paid by the purchaser, the less should be the bonus conferred on the landlord. At the same time the annuity payable by tenants was raised from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. To these provisions, which dealt with future agreements, there was added a number of other provisions relating to agreements still uncompleted, of which the most important was one relieving Irish rates of the burden incurred by losses due to the flotation of stock at a discount.

The Act of 1909 marks the last stage, up to the present time, in the history of land purchase. A Bill was indeed introduced in 1913, and another in 1914, but both were withdrawn. In introducing the Bill of 1913 the Chief Secretary for Ireland stated that two-thirds of the work of land purchase had already been achieved. Nearly £100,000,000 had already been advanced under the Acts of 1903 and 1909; and it was estimated that £60,000,000

more would complete the work. The Bill which he proposed, but eventually dropped, contained three provisions —that landlords should in future be paid half in cash and half in stock; that the annuities payable by purchasers should for the future be paid at the rate of $3\frac{5}{8}$ per cent. instead of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and finally that compulsion should be applied to landlords and tenants, and the price determined, in that event, by a judicial commissioner. Thus compulsion, which the Act of 1903 had been in great part intended to avoid, was finally proposed. It had already been applied, on a small scale, in the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907; it was now suggested as a general measure. The fact was, as observers had seen for some time past, that without compulsion the sale of highly rented grazing lands could hardly be effected; for landlords would be unwilling to sell except at high prices, which tenants would be unwilling or unable to pay.

On the whole it may now be said that there is no serious agrarian problem in Ireland. Probably more than half of the soil of Ireland is now in the hands of the old tenants; and of the remainder we have already seen that one-half (or 5,000,000 acres) is waste bog and mountain. Nearly ten years ago a German writer, Dr. Bonn, could write that 'the Irish tenants have had conditions assured to them more favourable than any other tenantry in the world enjoy'. There are, of course, problems still left. The average size of the farms purchased under the Act of 1903 amounts, it is said, to nearly fifty acres. Land purchase thus hardly touches, at any rate directly, the problem of the small holdings of the West of Ireland, though, as we shall see immediately, serious attempts have been made in the last twenty years to deal with that problem. And again, even if there is no serious agrarian problem,[1] there is, if we may make the distinction, a serious

[1] There is one difficulty which should be mentioned before we leave the subject of land purchase. Land purchase creates a

agricultural problem. Ireland is a land inured by long tradition to grazing. The problem which thus confronts Ireland is the problem of encouraging tillage; but there is also the problem of encouraging a more economic system of pasture. Instead of merely producing cattle which go to Great Britain to be fattened, Ireland has to learn to fatten as well as to produce cattle. Further, instead of producing butter in large quantities in summer, when it fetches poor prices, and in small quantities in winter, when it commands good prices, Ireland has to learn, through the adoption of stall-feeding, to follow the example of Denmark and to produce a steady supply through the whole of the year. Fortunately, as we shall see, Ireland possesses in the I.A.O.S., and more especially in the Department of Agriculture, organs for solving these problems on her own account and by her own skill.

(5) *The Congested Districts*

To complete this survey of land legislation in Ireland, it remains to deal with the congested districts, which, in the last twenty years, have been differentially treated, and have been given, in many respects, an administration of their own. The congested districts, as we have seen, are districts in which deficit or uneconomic holdings predominate. A French writer has spoken of them as 'rural slums': they are for the country what overcrowded

system of peasant properties; and the danger of the system is that those properties may disappear as the result of heavy mortgages, or be subdivided until they are too small to afford a livelihood to their owners. These dangers were early foreseen, and an attempt was made to meet them in advance. Since 1881 peasant proprietors have been prevented by law from subdividing (or subletting) their farms, or from incurring, without the consent of the Land Commission, any mortgage for more than ten times the sum of the annuity payable on the purchase-money advanced them by the State.

tenements and sweated workshops are for the town. The problem which they raise was first faced by Arthur Balfour in the Land Act of 1891. Under a section of this Act those districts (or, to speak more exactly, those electoral divisions) were to be deemed congested, which contained at least 20 per cent. of the population of the county in which they lay, and which were assessed, for purposes of rating, at an average amount of less than thirty shillings per head of that population. The definition is somewhat artificial: it omits districts which are really congested; but as it stands it includes about three and a half million acres, and a population of about half a million, in the West of Ireland, and mainly in Connaught. In this area the Act of 1891 created a new authority—the Congested Districts Board—with an income of £55,000, which was to be expended on schemes of general improvement. The chief method of improvement has naturally been the enlargement of the holdings to an economic size. The Board has bought estates, containing both tenanted and untenanted land: it has put them in order: it has resettled them in plots of adequate size; and it has then sold them to the peasantry. The main difficulty has been to find a sufficient number of adequate holdings for all the peasantry of a district. Where there was untenanted land available, or where grazing land could be acquired in order to increase the size of the holdings, the difficulty could easily be met; but resettlement has sometimes involved the transplantation of a number of holders to another district, and this is a policy distasteful both to those who are transplanted and to the new district to which they are moved. In addition to this work of resettlement the Board has also sought to improve the congested districts by spreading knowledge, and by providing material facilities for agriculture and other industries. It has furnished farmers with cheap seed: it has attempted to improve the breed of cattle and sheep: it has sought to teach the peasants how to deal with diseases both of cattle and of crops. Sea-fisheries have

been encouraged, and boats and piers provided : village industries, particularly the making of Donegal tweeds and Irish lace, have been fostered ; and the Board has also co-operated with the I.A.O.S. in promoting agricultural co-operation. On the whole it has been a decided success ; and what is more, it has been popular. The one general criticism against the Board, a few years ago, was that it attempted too little and went too slowly. Up to 1905 it had only dealt with 400,000 acres. But of late years it has been equipped with additional funds, particularly by the Act of 1909 ; and it has been armed with fresh powers. The Act of 1903, as we have seen, enables the Estates Commissioners to aid its work in those districts which, though really congested, lie outside the definition laid down in the Act of 1891. The Commissioners may now buy anywhere in Ireland a ' congested estate ' (defined as an estate of which half consists either of bog or mountain, or of holdings valued at less than £5), and subject to certain limitations they may sell them to the sitting tenants at a loss. In 1904 the Congested Districts Board devolved upon the new Department of Agriculture (created in 1899) the work it had hitherto done in encouraging agriculture ; and it was thus set free to pursue more actively its policy of resettlement. Finally, in 1909, it acquired not only a considerable increase of its revenues, but also powers of compulsory purchase. More drastic changes are possible, and perhaps desirable. The relations of the Board to the Department of Agriculture on the one hand, and on the other hand to the Land Commission, and more especially to the Estates Commissioners, are in need of consideration and revision. The addition of representative members to the Board, which consists of eleven members, three of whom are *ex officio* and five permanent, might strengthen its hands and increase its popularity. The definition of the congested districts might be made broader and more elastic. These, and other recommendations, were made in the Report of the Dudley Commission on con-

gestion in 1908, but they have still to be carried into operation.[1]

One class of Irishmen concerned with Irish land has still to be considered. This is the rural labourer. Rural labourers in Ireland itself are not very numerous, though many small Irish farmers come to England and Scotland to act as labourers during the summer. As a class, the labourers of Ireland have not benefited greatly from land legislation until recent years. Only a small minority (some 4,000 in all) have had the rent of their small plots judicially fixed under the Act of 1881 ; and few if any of them were affected by the various Acts which, between 1885 and 1903, instituted the system of land purchase. Poor Law Unions, however, had the power of letting cottages and gardens to labourers at a weekly rent under cost price ; and by 1906 over 15,000 cottages had been erected under these powers. In 1906 the Irish Labourers Act marked a further advance. Loans were henceforth to be given to District Councils (which had been called into being by the Irish Local Government Act of 1898) for the erection of labourers' cottages, and help was also to be given to labourers in the purchase of their plots. It was stated in 1913 that upwards of £4,000,000 had been advanced in aid of labourers ; and a new Act of 1914 increased the amount of advances which the Act of 1906 had authorized. ' The Irish agricultural labourer can now obtain a cottage with three rooms, a piggery, a garden allotment of an acre or half an acre, and for this he is charged a rent of from one to two shillings an acre . . . On the whole, these cottages by the wayside give a hopeful aspect to the country. They are neat, well-built, and

[1] Mention should be made, in connexion with the congested districts, of the opening up of Western Ireland by light railways—a work begun by Arthur Balfour. The improvement of Irish railways in general is a necessary work if freights are to be reduced and agriculture encouraged by cheap transit.

sanitary, and compare favourably with the old mud-walled and mud-floored cabins.' (Padraic Colum, *My Irish Year.*) It would be no bad thing if England in this respect could follow the example of Ireland.

(6) *The Irish Agricultural Organization Society and the Department of Agriculture*

And indeed Ireland has much of example and teaching to give to England in things agricultural. The Irish Agricultural Organization Society, with the Department of Agriculture which sprang from its initiative, are things of which any country might be proud, and which we in England, it is to be hoped, may one day imitate. The Agricultural Society came into existence in 1889. Its author and begetter was Sir Horace Plunkett, an Irishman who had had experience of farming in the Western States of America. In politics he was a moderate Unionist ; but his policy was one which had no concern with politics. He sought to unite men of all parties ; and above all he sought to kindle in Ireland a new ideal, independent of politics—the ideal of an economic regeneration to be achieved by Ireland herself, from her own resources and on her own lines. The immediate object of the society which he founded in 1889 was to make farming more lucrative for the farmer by the encouragement of co-operation, both in production and, as far as possible, in distribution. Hitherto agricultural production had run on old and comparatively ineffective lines ; and effort had been concentrated on tenure and its incidents—rent, compensation for disturbance, free sale of improvements, and the like. It was the work of Sir Horace Plunkett to suggest that recurrent agrarian legislation, intended to bring about a new division of the gross agricultural product on a new scheme every few years, was not the way of prosperity. The true solution of the problem of the land was to increase the product itself, and to produce it more cheaply as well.

'In fact, while the country was fighting for the raw material of prosperity—that is, for the land—the production, manufacture and business connected with it, where profit or loss mainly arise, was completely neglected.' Taking for granted, therefore, the revolution in tenures achieved by the various Land Acts, the I.A.O.S. sought to add, as a corollary and a complement, a revolution in the methods of farming, and it sought to achieve this revolution on the lines of agricultural co-operation. Acting as a *cadre* for all manner of co-operative societies, and serving as a centre of encouragement for their action, it founded or helped co-operative creameries, to which the farmers could send their milk; co-operative banks, from which, by pledging their joint credit, they could borrow at low rates of interest; societies for collecting, grading, and distributing eggs; societies for the encouragement of the growing of flax; societies, in a word, for almost every sort of rural occupation.[1] Agricultural instruction was also fostered; new methods were introduced; and farmers were taught to use new manures, and new methods of dealing with diseases in crops or in stock. Within twenty years—that is to say, by the end of 1910—there were nearly 900 co-operative societies (dairy societies, agricultural societies, credit societies, and others) organized by the I.A.O.S.: their membership was nearly 100,000: their annual turnover was over £2,500,000.

Not only was economic prosperity thus fostered: a new social order was also evolved. When, under the various Land Purchase Acts, the unit of the estate began to disappear from Ireland, a new unit had to take its place. The genius of the Irish race, with its tribal past, suggested

[1] The development of home industries, to supplement income drawn from agriculture, is one of the objects of the I.A.O.S. In this connexion mention should also be made of the Industrial Development Association, which stands side by side with the I.A.O.S. in the work of encouraging a native Irish economy.

some form of communal unit. Legislation could hardly create such a unit; and the Wyndham Act, though it instituted local committees for dealing with rights of grazing and of turf-cutting, on the whole left the peasant proprietors whom it created in a position of isolation from one another. It was here that agricultural co-operation found a natural sphere. In the districts where co-operative societies existed they became the units of social life. They expanded—or perhaps it would be more true to say that they are expanding—into what have been called 'general purposes societies'. A successful dairy society, for instance, may undertake other functions, and thus, as 'Æ'[1] has written, it may 'gradually absorb into one large well-managed association all the rural business connected with agriculture in the parish'. A new spirit and a new *morale* naturally accompany such developments. The local society, managed by a committee elected by its own members, becomes a centre of living interest. Each member is concerned in the work of his fellows, since his profit depends on a general level of good management; and public opinion condemns the man who does not play his part properly in the working of the group. It is no wonder that those, who, like 'Æ', have lived in the midst of these developments, should see in them a new hope for Ireland, and indeed for the world. Within the last few years a movement called Guild Socialism has arisen in England, and its leaders have prophesied as if they had found a new thing. As a matter of fact, their fundamental principles are many years old in Ireland; and years ago 'Æ' saw the vision of 'a society within the State—not controlled by the State, but finally controlling its necessary activities'—a society containing 'a number of free associations of workers and producers which, in the country,

[1] 'Æ' (George Russell) has for many years been connected with the I.A.O.S. Sir Horace Plunkett was able to attract into the movement he started men of letters and clergy as well as farmers and men of business.

would have the character of small nations, and in the towns, of the ancient guilds '.

The co-operative movement in Ireland has thus not only fostered economic development, by cheapening production; it has also affected social relations, by helping to create a new unit of social life. It has done more. It has helped to create, in the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, a new political department whose structure and organization are in many ways remarkable. When the I.A.O.S. had been at work for some years, Sir Horace Plunkett convened, in the course of 1895, a committee, known as the Recess Committee, to consider how a system of State-aid could be added to the voluntary work already done by the Society. The committee, like the movement from which it sprang, was catholic and non-partisan: it included representatives of landlords as well as tenants, of Ulster as well as of the rest of Ireland. Its result was the institution, in 1899, of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. The genesis of this department is in itself of profound interest to the political theorist. The value of voluntary social effort lies in the fact that it can initiate and conduct experiments, which, if they are successful, the State can seal with approval, and adopt into the order of its own organized and permanent life. The I.A.O.S. had made its experiment: the State in 1899 sealed its work and adopted its results.

Nor is the structure of the Department of less interest than its genesis. The purposes of the Department include the aiding of agriculture in all its branches: the facilitation of transport; the promotion of sea-fisheries; and the encouragement of applied education in science and art. To fulfil these purposes the Department is equipped with an income of over £160,000 per annum, and armed with powers hitherto scattered among a number of other bodies. At the head of the Department stands the Vice-

President (down to 1907 Sir Horace Plunkett, and since that date T. W. Russell), who represents the Department directly in Parliament. This already differentiates the Department from other Irish bodies, which are all represented collectively by the Chief Secretary; but its main and most striking differentia lies in the fact that it has at its side a number of representative bodies, through which it is kept in touch with agricultural and industrial needs and opinion. In the first place there is the Council of Agriculture, a body of 104 members, of whom two-thirds are appointed by the Irish County Councils, and one-third is nominated by the Department itself. The Council, which sits for three years, is a general deliberative body, empowered to discuss matters of public interest in connexion with any of the purposes of the Act which instituted the Department of Agriculture. In addition to the Council there are also two Advisory Boards, one for Agriculture, and one for Technical Instruction. The Board of Agriculture consists of twelve members, of whom two-thirds are elected by the Council of Agriculture, and one-third is nominated by the Department. The Board of Technical Instruction consists of twenty-one members, of whom four are nominated by the Department, four are elected by the Council of Agriculture, and the rest (apart from two nominated by the Irish educational authorities) are elected by Urban Councils. The two Boards are both advisory; and both have also the right of veto on any proposed expenditure of the endowment fund of the Department. In all these ways the working of the Department is associated with Irish public opinion at large. But this is not all. By a further provision of the Act of 1899 the Department is directly associated with local authorities. County and Borough Councils may appoint committees, composed (like our English Education Committees) partly of members of the Council and partly of co-opted persons, to carry out any scheme of the Department which is local in its bearing. In such a case no moneys are to be

advanced by the Department, unless a corresponding advance is made by the local authorities; and thus the Department and the local authorities are made conjoint powers in the execution of local works. Finally, it remains to be said that, at any rate in its beginnings, the Department kept in close touch with the various co-operative societies, and carried out much of its work through them and by means of their aid.

The effects of this organization of both agriculture and technical instruction under democratic control have been large. The system of democratic control is in itself of supreme value in educating those who share in its working; but the direct educational activities of the Department have also been manifold. The teaching of science in secondary schools has been changed: itinerant instructors have carried to farmers and their wives instruction in agriculture and in domestic economy; and a general system of more advanced agricultural instruction has also been organized. The one sad feature of recent years has been a cleavage between the Department and the I.A.O.S., the founders of which had so much to do with the creation and inception of the Department. Down to 1907 they were held together: Sir Horace Plunkett, the founder of the I.A.O.S., was also the Vice-President of the Department. In the last ten years they have diverged; and an account of the reasons of that divergence will throw light on the forces at work in modern Ireland.

The Liberal Government which came into power at the end of 1905 was in close touch with the Irish parliamentary party. The Irish party had become unfriendly to Sir Horace Plunkett;[1] and though he was retained in office for

[1] Irish Nationalists had originally co-operated with Sir Horace Plunkett; and John Redmond had been a member of the Recess Committee of 1895. But in 1904, Redmond had come to think 'that the real object of the movement . . . is to undermine the

some time by the new Liberal Government, he eventually left the Department in 1907, and was succeeded by T. W. Russell, who was more acceptable to the Nationalist leaders. The objection of the Irish party to Sir Horace Plunkett was, in part, that he was a Unionist, and that the effect of the I.A.O.S., with which he was identified, was to divert the attention of Ireland from Home Rule. Other causes, however, also underlay their objection. 'The Irish parliamentary party', says an Irish writer, 'nominally represents the agrarian interest, but it really represents the trading interest.' The first part of this saying contains a negative implication which is dubious; but there is a considerable amount of truth in the second part. The members of the Irish party are closely connected with the class of country traders. The country traders are the chief men and the capitalists of their districts; they are strongly represented in the local branches of the United Irish League; and they naturally exercise a considerable influence on the policy of the Irish party. Economically their interests are opposed to the movement towards agricultural co-operation. They deal not only in provisions, but in agricultural implements and raw materials; and they not only sell to the farmers—they also buy their butter and eggs, cows and pigs, and other produce. Agricultural co-operation threatens their profits. If the farmer sells his produce directly to the consumer, and still more if he buys his implements and materials directly from the producer, the middleman is in danger of elimination. We can readily see that the influence of the country traders on the Irish party will be exerted in favour of opposition to the co-operative movement. We can see, too, that the spread of co-operation in an agricultural country such as Ireland will tend to produce a division of parties along new lines. There will be a party of farmers—an agrarian

National Party and divert the minds of our people from Home Rule, which is the only thing which can ever lead to a real revival of Irish industries.'

party—seeking to enable the agricultural interest to buy and sell directly ; and there will be a party of traders or middlemen, seeking to protect the trading interest against the competition of co-operative agricultural societies. This, it has been prophesied, will be the line of division in the Irish Parliament of the future.

But whatever the future may bring, it is already the line of division of the present ; and it has already resulted in a struggle during the last few years, in which the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction has been involved. The country traders, it should be explained, are not only strongly represented in the ranks of the Irish party : they have also a strong representation on the Council of Agriculture, and they are thus able to influence the Department of Agriculture. They sit in the district and the county councils ; and since these, as we have seen, are closely connected with the working of the Department, they are able to exert a degree of pressure on its policy, and to control, to some extent, its lines of action. When T. W. Russell succeeded Sir Horace Plunkett in the control of the Department, the effects of this pressure began to be seen. In 1910 he condemned the credit banks organized by the I.A.O.S. as mostly insolvent. In 1911 he refused to concur in a proposed grant from the Development Commission to the I.A.O.S., and the Council of Agriculture endorsed his refusal by a majority. The policy was defended by one of the Nationalist leaders on the ground that the Department exercised no control over the I.A.O.S., and that in any case, it was undesirable to give the aid of the State to co-operative societies which were in active competition with the trading class. To meet the first objection, a recommendation was made by the Development Commission in 1912, that the I.A.O.S. should receive a grant of £2,000 on condition that the Department of Agriculture, the Council of Agriculture, and the Congested Districts Board were all represented in its management.

The proposal, however, fell through, because both of the first two bodies declined to be represented. Finally an agreement was made in 1913 by which the I.A.O.S. received £2,000, and a promise of future help, on condition that it accepted eleven nominees of the Development Commission on its committee of management, and abstained from affiliating in the future co-operative societies not purely agricultural. In the same year that the I.A.O.S. received this belated recognition, an American Commission on Agricultural Credit and Co-operation, which had been investigating the work of the Society, issued a report which reflected most favourably on the methods it used and the results it had achieved.

The development of the I.A.O.S. has indeed formed a most important chapter in the history of modern Ireland. The Society has done three things. It has fostered the economic development of Irish soil ; and here it has had to face, and still has to face, the opposition of the trading interest. Secondly, it has gone far to create a new unit of social order in the country-side. Lastly, it has produced political results of considerable importance. The founders of the Society have also been the founders of the Department of Agriculture, and thereby of a co-ordination of local democratic authorities with a public office in the management of economic affairs which is unique in the United Kingdom. Moreover, the working of the local co-operative societies themselves has not been without effects which may ultimately prove to have great political value. The elected committees of these societies have served to bring out local leaders : the sense of a common interest engendered by their working has produced the true spirit and ethics of joint action ; and it may well be found, when Home Rule eventually comes into operation, that the best preparation for Home Rule was a movement on which the Home Rule party looked askance. Yet the hostility of politicians to the movement was natural, and

it can readily be understood. Arguing as they did that Home Rule was the *sine qua non* of all other things, and that without it nothing could flourish, they could not afford to encourage a movement which was already making agriculture flourish even before Home Rule had come. And they were perhaps right in thinking that farmers who became interested in co-operation and its profits would forget to be interested in politics, and that comfort might corrupt a people into some oblivion of its ancient ideal. Yet it is also true that to many the successful management of Irish agriculture by Irishmen has been, as Sir Horace Plunkett foresaw that it might be, the greatest of arguments in favour of the management by Irishmen of all their domestic affairs.

(7) *The Problem of Labour in Irish Industry*

While the sun has arisen for the Irish farmer, there is still darkness for the industrial workers of Ireland. The Dublin strike of 1913 showed that industrial conditions in Ireland stand in sore need of reform. Here again, it is a sad thing that Irish politicians have not been in close touch with the working classes of Ireland, and that Irish Labour has been in conflict with Irish Nationalism. The result has been that when an Irish movement arose, under the guidance of James Larkin, it was Syndicalist in character, and averse from the channels of political action. It turned aside, for that reason, alike from the English Labour party and from the Irish Nationalist party ; and, for the same reason, it has latterly found its ally, by a natural congeniality of aims, in the Sinn Fein organization. Hitherto it has achieved no success. The strike of the Dublin Transport Workers in 1913 ended in failure. Deprived, from the first, of the support of the Irish party; losing, in the course of the strike, the sympathy of English labour ; and destitute of any solid organization of their own to sustain them in the struggle, the strikers emerged

in 1914 discomfited and beaten. Yet, if they had done nothing, they had shown that much needed to be done. When a Housing Inquiry Committee came to look into the conditions of life in the Dublin slums (slums in part owned by members of the Corporation of Dublin), it found that those conditions were intolerable. There were 21,000 families residing in one-room tenements; and 9,000 of these tenements were occupied by four persons or more. Fourteen thousand new houses were required; yet wages were so low that the labourers could not pay an economic rent if they were erected. The Irish agricultural problem has gone a long way towards solution, and even the 'rural slums' in the congested districts have, since 1891, been ameliorated. The Irish industrial problem still awaits its settlement; and some comfort and decency of life has still to be introduced into the urban slums of Ireland.[1]

[1] On labour movements in Ireland during the war the reader is referred to Chapter V, pp. 102–3, 124–129.

IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

(1) *The Central Government*

THE Union of 1800 seemed to achieve a union of Great Britain and Ireland in one United Kingdom. In reality it meant a curious combination of union and separation. Two Parliaments were united: two separate executives still remained. A United Parliament passed Acts, whether for the whole United Kingdom, or separately for Ireland;[1] a separate Irish executive enforced those Acts. Dublin Castle still remained; and Ireland was governed by a number of boards acting under its authority. This is still the case to-day; and as far as central government in Ireland is concerned, the only change introduced since 1800 has been the creation of new boards, until to-day there are nearly seventy, or, if we exclude the less important, over forty separate authorities for the government of Ireland. All these authorities (with the one exception of the Department of Agriculture, which is represented separately by its Vice-President) are represented in Parliament by the Chief Secretary for Ireland; and they are all accordingly under his control. Sometimes, indeed, a strong Lord Lieutenant may exercise considerable influence; or the Permanent Under-Secretary may actually gather the threads of affairs in his hands; but in theory, and, as a rule, also in practice, the Chief Secretary controls

[1] It has been calculated that in the twenty years from 1891 to 1910, 547 Statutes were passed generally for the whole of the United Kingdom, and 521 were passed separately for England, Scotland, or Ireland, or for some two of these. Of these 521 Statutes, a considerable number were passed for Ireland.

the administration of Ireland. The Chief Secretary is a member of the British Cabinet, and, on all Irish issues important enough to need submission to its consideration, he is bound to take and to act by its advice. In the last resort, therefore, the British Cabinet controls the separate system of administration which exists in Ireland. The British Cabinet is responsible to the British Parliament, and ultimately to British public opinion; and to that extent the Irish Executive, which it ultimately controls, may be said to be a responsible executive. Those who believe in Home Rule, however, argue that if there is to be a separate Irish Executive, it should be responsible to an Irish Parliament and to Irish public opinion; and they hold that, until it is thus responsible, it is not really responsible at all. British public opinion, being largely concerned with issues other than Irish, may ignore an act of the Irish Executive to which Irish public opinion is fundamentally opposed; and thus the Irish Executive, which is not responsible to Irish opinion, may not be responsible to any opinion whatever. One department, it is true—that of Agriculture—is to some extent responsible to Irish opinion. In the Council of Agriculture, and in the Boards of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, it has at its side representative organs; and its methods of co-operating with local authorities involve some responsibility to those authorities. But there are tens and tens of other authorities which should also be responsible; and the only way of securing such responsibility is the institution of a single representative organ to whose consent and concurrence they may all be made amenable.

This is the gist of the demand for Home Rule which Butt first formulated in 1870. Democracy involves the responsibility of an executive to public opinion: such responsibility of the Irish Executive is impossible without Home Rule; and democracy therefore involves Home Rule. Until Home Rule is gained, there can only be a state of

de facto coercion—or, in other words, Irish public opinion has to bend to the Executive, instead of the Executive having to bend to that opinion. It must, indeed, be confessed that the word coercion played a large part in Irish debates during the last century. In one hundred years, it is said, eighty-seven Coercion Acts were passed. The dilemma at first sight seems cogent: 'either Home Rule or Coercion—there is no third alternative'. But it should be remarked in fairness that coercion in Ireland has not, as a rule, been a political weapon directed against political agitation. The causes of coercion have generally been agrarian in character—though it must be admitted that agrarian and political agitation have been so intermixed and interfused in Ireland (such mixture and fusion was indeed the essence of Parnell's policy), that it is difficult to establish any clear distinction. The Coercion Act passed by Gladstone in 1881 was elicited by the Land League and the prevalence of agrarian crime: the Crimes Act of 1887 was connected with the new agrarian 'plan of campaign' and the National League: the régime of coercion about 1900 was due to the agitation which sprang from the United Irish League. So far as coercion was due to agrarian causes, it was an accidental and not an essential attribute of Irish government. It depended on causes which wise legislation could remove, and those causes have, as a matter of fact, been largely removed by the agrarian legislation of the last fifty years.

But coercion is an ugly thing, and it cannot be dismissed without further investigation. The Coercion Act of 1881 authorized the Government to imprison, without trial and without limit of time, any person who was liable to 'legitimate suspicion'. It was followed in the next year by an Act which gave the police the power of making domiciliary visits in disturbed districts, and of arresting persons found absent from their homes by night. The Crimes Act of 1887, which took the place of these Acts, and remained in force

under the Unionist Governments for many years, enabled the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim disturbed districts and dangerous associations, and substituted summary conviction for trial by jury in a number of cases. But specific Acts passed by Parliament for the purpose of coercion were not the whole of the matter. Behind them lay other things and other potent weapons. First of all there was (and there still is) a special police for Ireland—the Royal Irish Constabulary. Instituted as far back as 1835, the Royal Irish Constabulary is something of a semi-military force, over 10,000 strong, under the immediate control of the Irish Executive, and independent of local authorities. Armed on special occasions with rifle and bayonet, and patrolling the whole country, the Royal Irish Constabulary is a guarantee of law and order, but on somewhat drastic lines, and at a large cost. Yet it is not unpopular: its ranks are largely recruited from the Irish Nationalists themselves; and the police system of Ireland has not been despotic or arbitrary. Besides the police we have also to take into account the Irish judiciary and the judicial methods which it employs. Here there are two things which deserve notice—the system of Resident Magistrates (R.M.), and the use, or abuse, of the jury. The resident, or stipendiary, magistrates were instituted, at about the same time as the Royal Irish Constabulary, during the reign of William IV. They are appointed, and they are liable to dismissal, by the Lord Lieutenant; and they are thus subject, in the last resort, to the Irish Executive. They can control the action of the Constabulary, and they have the power of inflicting a sentence of six months' imprisonment. There are over sixty of these magistrates in Ireland, many of whom are drawn from the ranks of the Protestant and landlord class; but while they have sometimes been criticized as incompetent, and sometimes vilified as partial and biased against the Nationalist cause, it is fair to say that on the whole they have sought to do their duty, even though individual magistrates have been

guilty of prejudices and excesses. More serious is the matter of ' jury-packing '. It is often difficult in Ireland, particularly in agrarian cases, to find a jury which is free from prejudice. Trial by jury means the passing of a verdict on disputed facts by the honest judgement of a number of men who are fair samples of ordinary opinion. Where opinion is sharply divided, and passions tend to run high, such an honest judgement is difficult to obtain ; and the attempt to maintain the system of trial by jury under such conditions must necessarily encounter serious obstacles. Under these conditions the power of the Crown to exclude from the jury persons on the panel who are likely to be prejudiced has often been employed; but the result has been that justice has not always been truly and indifferently administered. If an unpurged jury may be prejudiced in the defendant's favour, a purged jury may equally be prejudiced against him ; and the dilemma is as obvious as its solution is difficult.

Such are some of the facts of coercion in Ireland. Some of these facts belong to the past. Since the last Unionist Government went out of office in 1905, the Crimes Act has ceased to be enforced. But even if we take all these facts together, there is perhaps one reflection that we are entitled to make. It is next to impossible to govern a country which is passing through serious agrarian troubles by the methods and the means proper to a country which has no such problems. Agrarian troubles mean agrarian crime ; and agrarian crime, if Government is to discharge its primary function of maintaining law and order, involves some degree of special action by the Executive. While England was passing through her agrarian troubles in the sixteenth century, the hand of the Tudor Government was exerted far more drastically than the hands of the Irish Executive were exerted in the nineteenth. And there is another consideration which should not be forgotten. It is very difficult, under the system of Anglo-Saxon jurispru-

dence, which knows nothing of an 'administrative law' protecting the Executive, to provide against any widespread disorder without the invocation of special powers, which have to be granted by Parliament, and necessarily provoke a vehement debate and outcry. A Continental government, with a system of administrative law at its back, is in a far stronger position. Where there is administrative law—and where, we may add, there is also conscription—coercion is possible without Coercion Acts. Great Britain must incur the obloquy of passing Coercion Acts to maintain order in Ireland ; and yet, if we reflect for a moment, it is no little testimony to the freedom of her institutions that a Coercion Act should need to be passed at all.

When all is said, however, the fact remains that coercion has been part and parcel of the government of Ireland for many years. It is true that it has been largely due to special agrarian causes ; it is true that of late years it has been practically discarded, but it also is true that the rebellion of this year has been partly due to the laxity, however well-intentioned, of the Irish Executive, and it is true that there is martial law in Ireland to-day. The dilemma recurs—either Home Rule or Coercion : either a national Parliament for Ireland or government by an Irish Executive resting permanently on a strong body of police, and occasionally reinforced by Coercion Acts, or, in the last resort, by troops. Even yet, however, we have not stated all the factors of the problem. We have still to consider the financial effects involved by the system of government which the Union of 1800 instituted. The subject of Irish financial relations with Great Britain is complicated and thorny, and its explanation would demand a separate treatise. Some twenty years ago, in 1896, immediately after the report of the Financial Relations Commission which had been appointed in 1894, there arose an agitation in Ireland against the over-taxation of

Ireland which that report was held to have revealed. The agitation united all parties in Ireland, for perhaps the first time since the Union, in a common grievance ; and it was urged that while the real taxable capacity of Ireland, as compared with that of Great Britain, was as one to twenty (or even, the extremists maintained, as one to thirty-six), Ireland actually paid in the ratio of one to twelve. She subvented the British Treasury ; she was a tributary of the British Empire.[1] There is, however, another side of the case. Just at the time of the report of the Commission the tide had begun to turn. For the financial year 1895–6 Irish revenue exactly paid for Irish expenditure. Before long the tide began to flow the other way. Seventeen years later, in the financial year 1912–13, it was calculated that Irish revenue fell short of Irish expenditure by a sum of £1,500,000—a result in part due to new Irish expenditure, such as that on land purchase, the Department of Agriculture, and education, but still more largely to the cost of social reforms common to the whole United Kingdom, such as Old Age Pensions, National Insurance, and Labour Exchanges. Ireland, therefore, in 1914 was drawing on Great Britain. This, however, is not the whole of the matter ; and Ireland can still justly complain of two things. In the past, since the Union of 1800, she has been overtaxed in comparison with Great Britain. In the present, the cost of her government is perhaps unduly large, and larger, in any case, than it would be if she had the power of deciding the scale of her own expenditure. Not only has she to pay the working expenses of a large number of Boards, and more especially of a large body of police : she has also, as long as Home Rule is withheld, to live on the scale of a partner who is far more wealthy than she. The present system of the government of Ireland may not only be held to involve coercion : it may also be charged with involving extravagance, and the

[1] The surplus of Irish revenue over Irish expenditure in 1893 was calculated at £2,000,000.

consequent imposition of a heavy burden on the Irish tax-payer.

We have therefore to consider some alternative system for the government of Ireland. There are two possible extremes, and there are, as it were, two possible middle ways. One extreme would be the complete assimilation of Ireland to Great Britain, with a single Parliament, such as there is at present, and with a single Executive as well. That extreme may be eliminated : Ireland has always had a separate Executive, and in view of her unique problems she will always need a separate Executive. The other extreme would be the concession to Ireland of full colonial self-government, such as belongs to Australia and Canada. This would give Ireland the right to erect her own tariffs and to maintain her own army and navy. This extreme has grave difficulties : Ireland is geographically too close to Great Britain, and she is too closely connected with Great Britain by commercial and financial ties (such as those created by land purchase, by old age pensions, and otherwise), for such a system, in its fullness, to be practicable. There remain the two middle ways. One of these is the way of Devolution, proposed by the moderate Unionists of the Irish Reform Association, and largely embodied in the Irish Councils Bill of 1907. In the abstract there is much to be said for such a scheme ; but it is enough to say that it does not satisfy national aspirations. The promoters of Devolution who put forward their plan in 1904 desired to add to the democratic Local Government Act of 1898 and the democratic organization of the Department of Agriculture two other things—an Irish Financial Council with a voice in the management of Irish finances, and a deliberative council to deal with private Bills relating to Ireland and such other matters as Parliament might delegate. They believed that such a scheme, with the whole movement of self-help in its various forms (and especially the I.A.O.S.) to give it support, would lead to

the gradual development of Ireland on its own lines, while it would not imperil the unity of the United Kingdom. They feared that concentration on political propaganda and the political goal of Home Rule might imperil the economic development which had gone so far and promised to go so much further : they feared that belief in a political panacea might bring disillusionment. Their motto was ' better a moderate remedy, with the patient himself co-operating in the cure, than strong remedies from which a complete and sudden cure is expected, and little may, after all, be gained.' Their plans, their hopes, and their fears, now belong to the past : their middle way, instead of attracting, repelled both extremes. There remains the second of the middle ways ; and that is Home Rule, or, in other words, a scheme of local autonomy falling short of full colonial self-government, but transcending any plan of Devolution. There are, it is true, some difficulties in such a scheme. The objection of Protestant Ulster, which feels that its religious life might be threatened, and its industrial development imperilled, by an Irish Parliament in which the majority would be Roman Catholic and agrarian, is the gravest of these difficulties. It is a further difficulty, of which no thoroughly logical solution can be found, to find an adjustment between a limited Irish Parliament and the sovereign Imperial Parliament. This difficulty centres round two questions—the question whether Irish members should sit in the Imperial Parliament as well as in their own, and the question of the lines on which financial control should be divided between the two Parliaments. But Home Rule in 1914 held the field : the Home Rule Act by the end of 1914 was on the Statute Book ; and we may conclude this survey of the central government of Ireland, as it stood in 1914, with a sketch of its main provisions.

Under the Home Rule Act a bicameral Parliament is created for Ireland ; and with this, when it comes into existence, there will naturally be associated a responsible

Irish Executive or Cabinet, composed of the parliamentary heads of the most important of the Boards through which Ireland is governed. The Lower House is to consist of 164 elected members, the Upper House of 40 members appointed by the Irish Executive; the two Houses are, in the event of disagreement, to sit and vote together. The powers of this Irish Parliament are subject to certain limitations. The issues of war and peace, the control of the army and navy, and the treaty-making power are all excluded from its purview. Its powers of taxation are limited. Certain 'reserved services', such as Land Purchase, the Royal Irish Constabulary, Old Age Pensions, and National Insurance, are maintained for the time being under Imperial control; but the Royal Irish Constabulary is to be transferred after an interval of six years, and the other services, with the exception of Land Purchase, may also be transferred after due notice. To these three limitations, thus concerned with foreign policy, finance and reserved services, certain others are also added *ex abundanti cautela*, mainly with the object of preserving any minority in Ireland, and especially Protestant Ulster, from possible oppression. The Irish Parliament is debarred from any legislation which imposes religious disabilities. Its Acts are to be subject to the veto of the Lord Lieutenant, acting on the advice of the Imperial Executive; and they are to be subject to nullification and amendment by the Imperial Parliament. It follows that the Irish Parliament is limited on a number of points, and it follows further that on these points the Imperial Parliament will continue to legislate for Ireland. But if the Imperial Parliament continues to legislate for Ireland, it is only fair that Irish representatives should sit in that Parliament; and therefore Ireland is still to send its members, reduced in number from 103 to 42, to sit at Westminster. This is the solution provided in the Act for one of the two main difficulties mentioned above. The other of these difficulties—that of finance—is met by an ingenious system

of division of powers under which, on the whole, the Imperial Parliament remains the main taxing authority, but the Irish Parliament, under certain restrictions, can vary or discontinue Imperial taxes, or even impose taxes of its own, provided they are not of a definitely protective character.

Such is the scheme of Home Rule which at the end of 1914 stood on the Statute Book. The war postponed its operation ; and before it can be brought into operation, if it should become operative, there is a grave problem that has to be solved. That problem is the resistance of Protestant Ulster to inclusion in any scheme of Irish Home Rule. The Home Rule Act treats Ireland as a single unit, and makes the whole of that unit self-governing. Protestant Ulster desires to be subtracted from that unit, and demands that Home Rule, if there is to be Home Rule, shall be Home Rule for Nationalist and Catholic Ireland only, and not for the whole of Ireland. Not content with the many safeguards multiplied in the Act, which they regard as paper guarantees, the Ulstermen stand for their complete exclusion from its operation ; and they have organized themselves in a militia to back their demand. That demand has, in principle, been accepted ; and indeed it is theoretically and practically difficult to enforce an Act, which is based on the idea of bringing Irish government into conformity with Irish public opinion, upon a community whose resolute public opinion sets in the contrary way. Hitherto the main difficulty of carrying into effect the plan of exclusion has seemed to consist in the finding of any satisfactory geographical limits for the excluded area. Nationalists and Ulstermen are intermixed, and in some areas they are almost in an equipoise. But the real difficulty perhaps lies deeper. Exclusion means a divided Ireland ; and a divided Ireland is an anomaly. Whatever the sectarian and political divisions by which Ireland is torn, she is really a unity.

The agrarian life of Protestant Ulster is fundamentally one with the agrarian life of the rest of Ireland; and the industrial activity of Belfast, however unique, is just for that reason a necessary complement of the full development of Ireland at large. The best of Irish opinion is opposed to the splitting of Ireland. Sir Horace Plunkett, long a moderate Unionist, published a pamphlet in 1914 ('The Better Way: An Appeal to Ulster not to desert Ireland'), in which he pronounced against exclusion, and adopting Home Rule as inevitable, and indeed desirable, sought to find a way in which Ulster could voluntarily be included in its scope. The way is difficult, but perhaps, after all, it has to be found. Exclusion, attempted in 1914, but postponed by the coming of war, has again been attempted during the war, and again it has been postponed. The Irish problem has still to be solved. But it is, perhaps, some comfort to those of us who live in Great Britain to reflect that the only difficulties remaining in the way of its solution are difficulties within Ireland herself. History will surely say that in Great Britain there is at last goodwill towards Ireland; and if only Englishmen, interfering in nothing, but in all things seeking to help towards conciliation and unity, can add one iota towards the making of a united self-governing Ireland, they can afford to stand without fear at the bar of the world's judgement.

(2) *The Local Government of Ireland*

The characteristic of local government in England, almost until the end of the nineteenth century, was that it rested in the hands of the squirearchy. Before the Local Government Act of 1888 the English counties were largely ruled by the Justices of the Peace, and the Justices of the Peace were drawn from the ranks of the county gentry. But the Justices had lost a number of their powers in the course of the nineteenth century, and more

especially (by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834) they had lost the control of the system of poor relief. All this, *mutatis mutandis*, is also true of Ireland, where local government reproduced the main features of local government in England, down to 1898. Here too, local government rested mainly with the landlord class ; and here too, as in England, local boards of guardians, after 1837, took over the control of poor relief.[1] But while in England the landed interest governed in the name and in virtue of the office of Justices of the Peace, in Ireland the landlords governed their counties through the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury was nominated by the Sheriffs from the local gentry ; and under the direction of the Justices of Assize it raised and expended the revenues necessary for the administration of each county. It should be added that a Presentment Session, consisting in part of elected members, was erected in 1836 to act as something of a representative check on the Grand Juries ; but in effect it only served as a species of Committee of these Juries, and actual power remained in their hands until, in 1898, a revolution was wrought in Irish local government corresponding to that which during the last ten years had been wrought in the local government of England.

The Irish Local Government Act which was carried by Gerald Balfour in 1898 was not only the sequel and counterpart to the changes which had just been accomplished in England : it was also the corollary and consequence of the social and economic developments which had been taking place in Ireland. The introduction of judicial rents, and

[1] A difference between England and Ireland which is worth noticing arises here. While in England new local functions (especially of sanitation) were successively entrusted, as they became public duties, to new elected authorities, until there was almost a chaos of such authorities, in Ireland these functions were confided to the Boards of Guardians, until these Boards had a multiplicity of duties.

still more the introduction of land purchase, has been fatal to the social power of the landlords; and the administrative corollary of these changes was drawn when in 1898 they were deprived of the control of local government, and that control was vested in bodies mainly drawn from the tenant and peasant classes. Oligarchy, overthrown on its social side, also disappeared on its political side. The Grand Juries lost their administrative functions. Their place was taken by elective County Councils; and by the side of these Councils there was also created, by the Act of 1898, a system of Urban and Rural District Councils, whose members were elected on the same suffrage, and which took over some of the functions hitherto exercised by the Boards of Guardians. A further addition was made to this democratic system of local self-government by the Act of 1899 which instituted the Department of Agriculture. The new County Councils, as we have seen, were given the right of electing two-thirds of the members of the Council of Agriculture: the Urban District Councils were vested with the power of electing the greater part of the members of the Board of Technical Instruction; and County and Urban Councils were vested with the power of appointing Committees to execute schemes of local improvement in co-operation with the Department. If we add to these public authorities the numerous co-operative societies (nearly 900 in number) organized by the I.A.O.S., and governed by elected committees of their own members, we shall see that in the last decade of the nineteenth century Ireland acquired a system of local self-government which in variety of range and breadth of function goes even beyond the system which exists in England. The experience of the twentieth century, so far as it has gone, has proved that Irishmen are fully competent to work this system. The Report of the Irish Local Government Board in 1902, issued after three years' experience of the working of the Act of 1898, assigned to the County and District Councils, whose first term of

office had just expired, ' the credit of having successfully assisted in carrying the Local Government Act into operation', and it was especially noticed that 'in no other matter have the Councils been more successful than in their financial administration'. Sir Horace Plunkett, in *Ireland in the New Century*, has spoken with no less warmth of the co-operation of the local authorities with the work of the Department of Agriculture. ' So quickly have the people grasped the significance of the new opportunities for material advancement now placed within their reach, that the Department has had to carry out, and to assist the statutory local committee in carrying out, a number and variety of schemes.'

Defects may, of course, be found in the working of the Irish County and District Councils. Political and partisan prejudices may sometimes enter: resolutions may be passed on general questions of politics which are extravagant and irrelevant; and the appointments of local officials made by the Councils may occasionally be liable to criticism. None the less, evidence goes to show that local representative bodies in Ireland have acted with efficiency and with financial economy; and it is fair to argue that success in the lesser affairs of local self-government is a safe augury of success in the greater matters of national autonomy.

V

IRELAND DURING THE WAR

I. Before the Rebellion

By midnight of Tuesday, August 4, 1914, Great Britain was at war with Germany. The entry of Great Britain into a European war could not but produce reactions and repercussions in Ireland. Historical parallels all looked that way; and geographical facts—eternal rocks that deflect and, in their measure, determine the mariner's course—contributed their share to this result.

The geographical facts are fundamental. The island of Ireland, the 'western outpost in the Atlantic', lies on the flank of the island of Great Britain. Considered merely as a strategical *point d'appui*, Ireland can aid in two ways an enemy of Great Britain who has managed to effect a permanent lodgement on its coasts. It can block the exit of British shipping into the open waters of the Atlantic: it can be made the basis of raids against the western coasts of Great Britain. Tacitus, writing over eighteen hundred years ago, remarks that he had often heard his father-in-law, Agricola, speak of the strategical position of Ireland and the advantage it might afford for the reduction of Britain. In all the great wars of modern history this advantage has been recognized by the enemies of England. Philip of Spain, at war with Elizabeth, and able to menace England on the east from his basis in Antwerp, sought to threaten England also on the west by landing troops in Ireland. Ireland served Louis XIV as a basis in his wars with William III; and perhaps the greatest victory of William over his antagonist was won at the battle of the

Boyne. What had happened before happened again during the war between Great Britain and revolutionary France. If there are any lessons of history, it is a lesson of history that Germany, menacing England, as Philip of Spain had done, from the coast of Belgium, would seek to threaten England also from the coast of Ireland.

Still confining ourselves to strategical considerations, we can see that Germany had more urgent reasons than any previous adversary of Great Britain for availing herself, if she possibly could, of the strategical position of Ireland. Her naval plan of campaign demanded that she should find a basis in the open Atlantic for the activities of her submarines. The western coast of Ireland, with its deep indentations and long inlets, would have afforded an admirable basis. From that basis her submarines might have preyed on British shipping until they had stopped the connexion between Great Britain and the world beyond the seas, and starved her into surrender. Compared with this, it was a minor advantage —but still a great advantage—that a German lodgement in Ireland would have distracted Great Britain from what, in that event, would have become her eastern (and no longer her western) front, and would have diverted to Ireland men and munitions from the crucial conflict in Flanders and Northern France.

But strategical considerations never have been the only considerations in regard to Ireland when Great Britain has been engaged in a great European war. In themselves they might have counted for little in the great war from which we have just emerged. ' A city is nought apart from the men that dwell together therein ' ; and it is Irishmen, and the feelings and policies of Irishmen, that matter far more, and have always, in all British wars, mattered far more, than the strategical position of Ireland. The gates would always have stood fast if there

had not been disaffection within them. It has been the misfortune of Great Britain, or her fault, or both, that there has generally been a discontented body of Irishmen ready to see in her peril their own opportunity ; in the strategical position of their island a lever to work her undoing ; and in and through her undoing a remedy for their discontents. Even before the coming of war with Germany, and when war was still a dark cloud on the horizon that seemed, for the moment, to be drifting away, this trend of Irish discontent was to be seen. As early as the summer of 1913 an article (believed to have been written by Casement) appeared in the *Irish Review*, under the title of ' Ireland, Germany, and the Next War ', and was circulated and commented upon in Germany. The essence of the article was its recognition of the strategical position of Ireland in any war between Germany and Great Britain. The main object of Germany in such a war, it was argued, ' would be the opening of the seas and their permanent freeing from . . . overwhelming control . . . largely based . . . upon the unchallenged possession of Ireland '. The method by which that object might be attained, it was suggested, was obvious. ' A free Ireland . . . is the key to unlock the western ocean and open the sea-ways of the world.'

What was the situation in Ireland, and what were the feelings and policies of Irishmen, that led to this suggestion of an identity of interests between the cause of Irish liberty and the cause of German militarism ? It would be hard to ask a harder question ; for the situation, the feelings and the policies in Ireland at the outbreak of the war are a tangled web that almost baffles analysis—a web of contradictions and paradoxes, criss-crossing in a design at once tragic and laughable ; a living oxymoron—acid pleasure and acrid gaiety—such as only Irish wit could depict, and English stolidity must sadly blunder in trying to describe.

The dominant fact in the summer of 1914 was the parliamentary triumph of the Nationalist party, and the imminent addition of a Home Rule Act, 'at the long last', to the Statute Book—an addition actually made in the early months of the war. The triumph, when it came, was unhappily little more than nominal; and it had largely been discounted in advance by the dogged resistance of Ulster Unionists, backed by the Unionists of Great Britain, to any measure of Home Rule. In September 1912—the year in which the Home Rule Bill was first passed through the House of Commons—Ulstermen made their Covenant, and over 200,000 of them swore to use any means that might be found necessary to resist the 'conspiracy' of Home Rule. A miniature State was quickly created on the basis of the Covenant, with a Council of four hundred, a special Executive Commission of five, and, behind both, a trained force of over 100,000 men with a general staff at its head. This military organization, in the light of later events, is especially significant; and it is also curious to notice how the formation of an alternative State, designed in case of need to supersede the actual legal authority, reproduced in essentials the policy of the Sinn Fein party, which had always advocated the creation of an alternative political system in Ireland—with its own postage stamps, its own free parliament, and its own organs of government—that might eventually, at the dawning of the fated day, take the place of an alien and extruded system. Irishmen differ; but sometimes they agree in unexpected ways.

By the spring of 1914 opinion in Great Britain was beginning to move towards the 'exclusion' of Ulster Unionists from the scope of the Home Rule Bill. The gun-running at Larne had shown—as, indeed, other evidence had already gone to show—that the Ulster Unionists were by no means engaged in a mere game of

bluff; and the 'Curragh Revolt' had equally shown that the officers of the Army were averse to being used in the execution of any measures that might precipitate hostilities with the Ulster Volunteers. By July, when the cloud of war began to blacken and to hurry nearer, and when everything seemed to depend on a solution of the Irish question which would avoid civil war, a conference was held at Buckingham Palace to consider the possibility of reaching such a solution by the way of exclusion. A solution was not reached, and the conference failed. The way of exclusion proved to be far more difficult in practice than it had appeared at first sight to be. There was the difficulty, first and foremost, of determining the area to be excluded; and this, it is generally said, was the rock on which the conference shipwrecked. But this was far from being the only difficulty. Ulstermen themselves were not really in favour of exclusion. It might serve as a rallying cry for the defeat of Home Rule; but it was probably never meant to be adopted as an actual policy. An Ulster excluded from the rest of Ireland would have been a poorer Ulster; and what Ulstermen really wanted was a homogeneous Ireland remaining *in statu quo*. To the Unionists of southern Ireland the exclusion of Ulster was still more repellent; for it would have left them a weak minority in an Irish Parliament, uncomforted and unsustained by the numbers and resources of the Ulster Unionists. But if it was repellent to Irish Unionists, alike in the north and in the south, exclusion was absolutely repugnant to every Irish Nationalist. Any scheme of exclusion would have left a large number of Nationalists in the excluded area; and over and above this fact there was a strong and persistent feeling, common to all Irishmen in the bottom of their hearts, that Ireland could not and must not be divided.

An antinomy had thus been established by the middle

of 1914. On the one hand arose the cry, 'No Home Rule without exclusion'; on the other (and also, if one may use the phrase, on the one) arose the cry, 'No exclusion'. Great Britain went to war with the antinomy still unreconciled. It is true that in the early months of the war the Home Rule Act was added to the Statute Book; it is also true that its operation was suspended, and that there was a general understanding that an amending Act, of a nature unspecified, was inevitable before it could come into operation. The antinomy was thus shelved rather than solved; and in the disturbed state of Ireland the shelving of the antinomy was very far from being the way of peace.

But apart from the Nationalists and the Unionists, there were at least two other organizations in Ireland whose influence on the general trend of future events was to be of considerable importance. The first of these was the organization of Irish Labour, or, to speak more exactly, of Labour in the city of Dublin. Mention has already been made (p. 80) of James Larkin, who emerged into fame after 1908, and led the strike of the Dublin Transport Workers in 1913. During the strike James Connolly, who had been a Socialist lecturer in Great Britain, returned to Ireland, and became one of Larkin's lieutenants; and when Larkin, at the end of 1914, went to America, Connolly became the driving force in the movement of Labour in Dublin. There had already been something of a syndicalist element in Larkin's propaganda, and in the hands of Connolly—no mean thinker, and the author of an important work on *Labour in Irish History*—this element was largely developed and expanded. It is impossible to label Connolly as belonging to any of the regular schools of Socialism. What he did was to attempt a fusion between his old lectures on Socialism and a new passion—new at any rate in its display—for Irish nationalism; and in the crucible of a fiery spirit

this fusion was readily, if perhaps not logically, achieved. He preached an alliance of the Irish 'proletariate', on the one hand with the modern co-operative movement, and on the other with that 'Gaelic revival' of an old and hallowed[1] past, in whose clan system the doctrine of Marx and the practice of common ownership had already found a place. It was for Ireland, so he taught, to rejuvenate her pristine purity by sloughing the skin of an alien capitalism—a teaching that appears somewhat fantastic when one remembers that it was against Irish capitalists, led by Mr. W. M. Murphy, that the strike of 1913 had been directed. But whatever his fantasies or his inconsistencies, Connolly made an attractive plea; and, wedding international Marxianism to nationalist feeling and tradition, he created that temper among his followers in Dublin which led them to die bravely for their cause in the rebellion of 1916.

The labour movement led by Connolly had a definite organization. It had a basis in Liberty Hall: it had a backing in a Citizen Army of its own, of which we shall have to speak afterwards. Sinn Fein was less of an organization than a spirit; and if it had a name, it had not, at any rate until after the rebellion, a habitation in the world of tangible political parties. It was a movement of opinion, rather than an organized party, down to the end of 1916; and the movement was one that included

[1] Englishmen can never understand the sentiment of a large part of Ireland, unless they remember to think of 'holy Ireland', and of all that that phrase can mean to an Irish nationalist. 'It is not merely', said a leader of 1916, speaking of the passion that haunts the phrase, 'the love of country . . . the love of the sod of Ireland . . . the love of liberty, or of the rights of man . . . economic grievance, or . . . grievance against the administration of alien law. . . . It is the knowledge that there still lives in this country, in this race, a "holy cause".' But is nationalism in itself ever 'holy', and has it ever a 'divine right'? 'I only am holy, saith the Lord'

some who in practice supported the parliamentary party of Irish Nationalists, while at the same time it included others whose sympathies were with 'direct action' and the policy pursued fifty years before by the Fenians. As a movement of opinion Sinn Fein belonged, as we have already seen (p. 24), to that general trend towards a policy of *fare di sè*—of staying at home 'to cultivate one's own garden', and of relying on independent voluntary effort in Ireland for further development—which also appeared in the form of agricultural co-operation and in the Gaelic League. But the very vagueness of Sinn Fein tended, on the whole, to bring it under the dominance of extremists; and in that sense the identification generally made between Sinn Fein and the party of rebellion in 1916 is not altogether mistaken. It is true that the policy of Sinn Fein, so far as it had a policy, did not include the use of physical force; but it is also true that, so far as it had a policy, its policy was opposed to the action of the Irish parliamentary party, and that such opposition tended to entail the advocacy of 'direct' methods in place of the methods of parliamentary agitation employed by that party. It is indeed one of the many tragedies of Irish politics that Irishmen who are not Unionists have generally had to choose between following the Nationalist party, whose 'machine' and methods and leaders they might dislike, or joining a vague movement which tended in the long run to lead to active rebellion.

More important, at any rate in their bearing on the outbreak of rebellion, than the four parties of Ireland—the Unionist, the Nationalist, the Labour party, and Sinn Fein—are what we may call the Four Armies, which roughly corresponded to those four parties. It is indeed one of the most amazing things in Irish history that by the end of 1914 four separate forces, unequal in efficiency but all equally illegal, should have been march-

ing and drilling and taking to themselves arms, while the Irish Government sat waiting and watching. It all happened ; but if it had not happened it would have been incredible ; and now that it has happened, it is almost inexplicable.

The first army was that of Ulster—and the first responsibility is that of Ulster, or (as Ulstermen would hasten to say) that of those who forced Ulster to take this fatal step. It would be idle, however, to argue here the question of responsibility, or to discuss whether blame should rest on Sir Edward Carson, who organized an army, or on Mr. Asquith, who 'forced' him to do so, or on Mr. Bonar Law, who practically blessed him for doing so. All that need be said in this place is what has been said already—that there were over 100,000 Ulster Volunteers in training in the course of 1913, with a general staff at their head, and that in the spring of 1914 they had added to the arms which they already possessed by a *coup de main* at Larne. It is one of the paradoxes which abound in Irish affairs that the organization of the army of Ulster Volunteers, far from being resented by all Irish Nationalists, was greeted, at any rate by some, with approval and (one might almost say) with admiration. Partly, perhaps, they were glad to see evidence of an independent spirit which could raise on Irish soil a free volunteer army ; and partly, again, they welcomed the chance of meeting one volunteer army by another. At any rate the Ulster Volunteers received the sincere flattery of imitation from a section of the Nationalists, and at the end of 1913 a body of Nationalist Volunteers was called into existence in opposition to the volunteers of Ulster. The movement which created this body was an independent movement, with which the leaders of the parliamentary party had no connexion ; and partly for that reason, and partly because they were anxious not to depart in any way from the line of strict constitutionalism

which they had hitherto taken—all the more sedulously because they were anxious to impress on British public opinion the difference between their methods and the methods of Ulster—they frowned upon the inception of the new movement. But the movement grew ; and when the Irish Government opposed obstacles to its growth which it had not ventured to oppose in Ulster, the parliamentary leaders decided, first to bring the movement under their control, and then to support it against the Government on the ground that it had been subjected to an unfair discrimination. The control was gained : the Committee at the head of the movement was afforced by a majority of Nationalists belonging to the party ; and the Nationalist Volunteers, brought into line with the Nationalist party, became as it were the secular arm of its policy. They resolved to show their mettle ; and on the last Sunday in July 1914 they attempted at Howth Harbour a feat of gun-running which should equal that of the Ulster Volunteers at Larne. The attempt ended in a collision between some of the troops and a hostile crowd : three civilians were shot ; and civil war, which had loomed dangerously near in the spring, now seemed nearer than ever.

Nine days after this 'black Sunday' Great Britain was at war with Germany. Six weeks after the beginning of the war a split took place in the ranks of the Nationalist Volunteers ; and a third army appeared in Ireland under the name of the Irish Volunteers. The union between the Nationalist Volunteers and the Irish parliamentary party had not been so close but that it had left some gaps and fissures ; and under the stress of war the union rapidly collapsed. Mr. Redmond, the parliamentary leader, had at once thrown himself into the British cause, hoping that, by carrying Ireland into that cause, he would bring over British opinion *en masse* to the cause of Irish Home Rule. When, however, he

showed that he sought to induce Ireland to contribute her quota of recruits to the British armies, he definitely alienated the extremists whom he had before succeeded in controlling; and early in September a provisional Committee, headed by Professor MacNeill and including among its members several who were afterwards prominent in the Rebellion, was formed with the object of recovering sole and undivided control of the volunteer movement. It failed to attain that object, for a majority of the volunteers, afterwards known as 'National Volunteers', followed Mr. Redmond; but it succeeded in forming a secessionist army of 'Irish Volunteers', whose members were afterwards to form the bulk of the rebel forces in 1916. In its inception, indeed, the army of Irish Volunteers was probably far from being animated by any positive idea of rebellion. The purpose of its leaders was negative: they were determined that, so far as in them lay, Ireland should not be committed to participation in a war which was not her own, and that there should be no recruiting so long as there was no national Government in Ireland to deal with recruiting. But such a purpose, however negative it might appear on its obverse side, had a reverse side which was sufficiently positive. In order to achieve their aim, the leaders of the Irish Volunteers were bound to hinder recruiting; and the policy of active opposition thus begun could not but gather momentum—momentum which, as we shall see, external forces were ready to aid in accelerating—until it issued at last with a rush into open rebellion.

To complete the tale of the 'four armies' we have still to mention the Citizen Army of the Labour movement. The Citizen Army was recruited among the working classes in the tenements of Dublin. It had arisen during the course of 1913, and in connexion with the industrial disturbances of that year; and it had been drilled by Captain White, a son of Sir George White, the defender

of Ladysmith. In 1915 it came under the control of James Connolly; but it was stronger in virtue of his personality than in the force of its own numbers, and it never attained the dimensions or the national scale of the three other armies in Ireland. Distinct at first from the Irish Volunteers—as distinct from them as is international Socialism from nationalist patriotism, or a programme of social revolution from a programme of political action—it nevertheless shared with the Irish Volunteers a policy of *intransigeance* and a tendency towards the *ultima ratio* of force. Just as Connolly combined Marxianism with nationalism, so his Citizen Army was led eventually to unite its forces with the Irish Volunteers; and though the two organizations were never completely fused, yet by the beginning of 1916 they were exchanging instructors and arms, and a working alliance had been formed under a virtually united control in which Connolly was the driving force and the strongest personality.

The really serious factor in the situation was the existence of the four armies, and in particular—at any rate from a British point of view—the existence of the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army. Volunteer forces of any kind, once they have learned to form fours and to march in formation, naturally desire to bear arms. They have gone through the preliminary discipline: they wish to add to that discipline the accoutrements and the weapons of the regular troops whose formations and movements they have already learned. Any one who has served in a volunteer force in England during the war will recognize the weight of this simple human impulse. But in Ireland there was also another and a more dangerous impulse at work. Revolution was in the air; and each of the forces, knowing that matters might come to the pass of 'a whiff of grape-shot', desired to fill its armouries and to prepare itself for counting as an effective force in the day of settlement. In revolutions, actual or potential,

the first step—and the step that costs most—is the acquisition of arms; and in recent Irish history the fateful days have been those of attempted or successful gun-running—the day of Larne; the day of Howth Harbour; and the day of the landing of Casement. Apart, however, from these attempted *coups* on the grand scale, there was a steady trickle of arms into Ireland all the time; and when the rebellion came, it was found that the rebels had not only more arms than the police had suspected, but also possessed some machine-guns and an unexpectedly large store of ammunition. At the same time it is only fair to add that the number of volunteers in Ireland was to the last very largely in excess of the amount of available weapons of offence.

Arms have to be procured from some source or other, and unless they are given freely, they have to be procured for money. The natural source of a supply of arms was Germany—a source from which arms were being imported into Ireland even before the summer of 1914. The natural source of a supply of money was the more extreme of the Irish organizations in the United States; and it appears to be the case that, from the beginning of 1915, the Irish Volunteers were receiving subventions—to which Germany had contributed—from that source. The more, therefore, they armed, the more were the extremists in Ireland drawn towards Germany and the extremer Irish organizations in the United States; and the more was that quadruple alliance knit—the alliance of the Irish Volunteers with the Citizen Army, and of both with Germany and with Irish-American societies such as the Clan-na-Gael—which was to constitute the basis of the rebellion.

Such was the logic implicit in the development of events in Ireland. The rise of trained volunteer forces led to secret arming: secret arming led the extremists in

Ireland to connect themselves with Germany and the Irish-American irreconcilables: that connexion, in its turn, led straight to rebellion. At what point in the development of events the Government ought to have acted—at what link it should have attempted to break the chain of sequence—it is not easy, even after the event, to suggest. *Obsta principiis* is a good motto; and if that motto had been followed, the Government would have stopped the first formation of the first volunteer force in Ireland—that of the Ulstermen. But the Ulstermen were backed by an English party, by English society, and by the officers of the Army; and when the Government at last attempted intervention, in the spring of 1914, it was hardly likely to succeed—and it did not succeed. Granted the establishment of the Ulster Volunteers, the establishment of other forces of volunteers followed logically; and when they were established, the Government could not do to them what it had not done to the volunteers of Ulster. But even if the volunteer forces had been allowed to establish their existence, they ought at any rate (it may be urged) to have been prevented from arming themselves. It is true that the Government attempted—some time after the formation of the Nationalist Volunteers, and, what is more, after the gun-running at Larne—to prevent the importation of arms into Ireland; but the difficulty was that Ulster had already armed itself, and that a measure which, attempted earlier, might have scotched a development that was fast becoming runaway, could now be accused of being an act of unfair discrimination, and had eventually to be withdrawn. Thus toleration of illegal associations was followed by toleration of illegal arming; and the Government only acted—but acted with a rude vigour that seemed meant to be an atonement, at the expense of others, for previous laxity—when the chain of sequence was complete, and illegal associations and illegal arming ended in civil war.

Thus dragons' teeth had been sown : armed men had sprung from the soil ; and even a trifle might precipitate a collision. From the end of 1914, however, there was a multiplication of grievances, which certainly rose above the dimension of trifles. A Home Rule Act was on the Statute Book ; but it had been postponed for a year by the Suspensory Act of September 1914 ; it was postponed again for six months by an Order in Council of September 1915 ; and it was again postponed for a further period of six months in March 1916. It is difficult to see how such postponement could have been avoided, while the problem of Ulster still remained unsolved ; but it is easy to see how the delay at once diminished the authority of the Nationalist leaders, and readily led extremists to urge that Home Rule was only a sham, and would never really be given by England until it was taken perforce by Ireland. The entry of Sir Edward Carson into the Coalition Cabinet formed in the spring of 1915, and the refusal at the same time of Mr. Redmond to accept a seat, were a further complication. The archpriest of the Covenant now sat in the counsels of Government, and the Irish executive, which had hitherto acted in close conjunction with the Nationalist leaders, was now afforced by Unionist politicians. Meanwhile the pressure of war-taxation began to be felt. Ireland, besides meeting her own charges in full, now paid in addition a contribution of some millions—a contribution which was afterwards almost doubled by the Budget of the spring of 1916—while none of the additional taxation went in Ireland, as much of it went in England, to swell the wages and the profits of those engaged in the manufacture of munitions. But what touched Ireland most of all was the question of recruiting, which, after the Registration Act of August 1915, gradually became the question of conscription. We have seen how Mr. Redmond threw himself into the task of recruiting in the gallant hope of uniting Ireland in a common contribution to the cause

of the Allies; we have seen how his policy immediately provoked a split in the ranks of the Nationalist Volunteers and created a schism in Nationalist Ireland. Ulster, too, failed to show any sympathy with Mr. Redmond's hopes; nor was the British War Office, on its side, prepared to entertain a plan, put forward early in the war, under which the various volunteer forces in Ireland might have received regular training and then been passed into standing camps—a plan which, according as it failed or succeeded, would either have denuded the ranks of the volunteers, or filled the camps with trained men serving in a regular way. In the issue Ireland was exempted from the Registration Act of 1915, and from the Military Service Act passed early in 1916; and indeed throughout the course of the war she continued to contribute troops by way of voluntary recruitment.[1] But if conscription was never applied, it was always expected; it was again and again advocated in some of the English papers; and that expectation and that advocacy must be taken into account in any estimate of the state of opinion in Ireland in the spring of 1916. Whether, as has often been urged, the application of conscription to Ireland, on the same terms and on the same footing on which it was applied in Great Britain, might have eased and remedied the whole situation, is a matter on which opinions will always differ. It might have produced national resistance, and have locked up more troops in Ireland than it could ever have sent to France. At any rate it is certain that the belated and nominal application of conscription to Ireland in the spring of 1918 produced a universal movement of opposition. On the other hand, an early and genuine enforcement of conscription might have ended the volun-

[1] By the end of 1915 she had sent to the colours nearly 94,000 men, out of a total number of men between the ages of nineteen and forty-one estimated at 560,000—or one in every six. More than half of this number came from the province of Ulster, and considerably over a quarter from that of Leinster.

teer movement, and have reconciled both Ireland to playing her part by the side of Great Britain, and Great Britain to granting—or rather, in view of the resistance of Ulster, enforcing—Home Rule for Ireland. As it was, conscription remained a sword of Damocles, suspended over but never descending upon the head of Ireland. To sit under a sword of Damocles is a nervous matter, and —to say nothing of excusing—it may at any rate explain a state of considerable tension and an ultimate outburst.

Yet that outburst might never have come if external incitement had not provoked its coming. There were, as we have seen, two quarters from which such incitement could and did come—Germany, and the Irish-American irreconcilables in the United States. It was easy for German envoys in the United States to establish a connexion with neo-Fenian organizations; and the members of those organizations, who had kept alive on American soil the hatred of England which their forefathers had cherished in the days of the Famine and the Great Emigration, were ready to enter into any connexion with any enemy of England. In March of 1916 German newspapers were able to recount how a national Irish convention had just met in New York; how it had passed a declaration of Irish independence; how it had resolved that 'Ireland is a European, and not a British island, and the complete independence of Ireland from Great Britain is absolutely necessary to the attainment of freedom of the seas'. In this last clause we may see the bond of connexion between German ambitions and the implacable section of Irish opinion: the 'freedom of the seas', which, if we translate it properly, meant the destruction of British sea-power and thereby of the British Commonwealth, was to be gained by the erection of an independent Ireland under the aegis of Germany. Ireland would then block the goings of Great Britain over the seas; Great Britain, with Germany on one side and

an independent Ireland allied with Germany on the other, would be finally crushed, and Irishmen would enjoy, at the long last, not only independence but revenge. The 'pirate Empire', the 'Empire of Hell' (this is the language of Irish irreconcilables, of which we may detect curious echoes in the versions of British history that have been current in Germany since the days of Treitschke), would sink to the place from which it had sprung; and as it sank, the world would breathe again.

Such arguments, and such a policy, may remind us of Casement—if indeed he were the author of that anonymous article in the *Irish Review* which has already been mentioned. At any rate Casement, who was in the United States at the outbreak of war, and afterwards proceeded to Germany, was already a connecting link between Irish-American organizations and Germany as early as the end of 1914; while, connected as he had been from the first with the Nationalist Volunteers, and remaining as he did in close connexion with the Irish Volunteers after their secession in September 1914, he was also able to act as an intermediary between them and their would-be supporters—or instigators—in America and in Germany. By the middle of 1915, however, the Irish-American organizations had established direct contact both with German envoys in America and with the Irish Volunteers; and the Clan-na-Gael, subsidized by German agents on condition that it raised corresponding sums by way of subscription, was sending financial aid to the leaders of the latter. The policy of these organizations was one of physical force and open rebellion. What was now necessary, in order to clear a way for that policy, was a drawing together of forces in Ireland and the securing of an adequate supply of munitions for those forces from Germany. The practical junction of the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army towards the end of 1915—a junction in which some part was played by the Irish Republican

Brotherhood, a secret revolutionary society whose leaders were known to the leaders of both these bodies—represented the drawing together of forces; and the coming of Casement on Good Friday, 1916, accompanied by a cargo of munitions which, however, was never landed, was to have secured the adequate supply of munitions.

Before we turn to the course of the rebellion which occupied the six days of Easter week (from Monday to Saturday, April 24–9, 1916), we may pause to notice the forces and the leaders engaged. The forces available in the country at large numbered about 16,000; and of these there were some 3,000 in Dublin. They had been trained in evolutions, which they had practised openly: they had signallers, an ambulance, and arms and ammunition which, if entirely inadequate (owing to the failure of the attempted landing of the cargo of munitions which accompanied Casement), were at any rate more adequate than the authorities had ever expected. The nominal head of the Irish Volunteers was Professor MacNeill, of the National University of Ireland, an authority on Celtic philology and early Irish history, and an original member of the Gaelic League. He had been one of the founders of the Nationalist Volunteers in 1913: he was the head of the provisional committee which created the secessionist body of Irish Volunteers in the autumn of 1914. But if he was an extremist, he was also a scholar: he had the scholar's caution, and possibly the scholar's dread of action; he opposed the continuance of the plans for rebellion after the failure of Casement's expedition, and when he was overborne by Connolly, he countermanded the mobilization of forces on Easter Sunday which was to have begun the rebellion, and thereby contributed materially to its failure. P. H. Pearse, who became during Easter week the commander-in-chief of the rebel forces and the president of the provisional government of the Irish Republic then proclaimed, was a man of a different

stamp. A poet and an enthusiast, he had conducted for some years an Irish-speaking school, on what he held to be old Gaelic lines, at St. Enda's, near Dublin ; he had been one of the founders of the Nationalist Volunteers in 1913, and he was one of the provisional committee at the head of the Irish Volunteers after the autumn of 1914. He could write noble verse, haunted by the thought of coming death, but inspired by a sense of the need of facing it bravely ; and if it was his hand that penned the proclamation of the Irish Republic, he could also write noble prose. Indeed when one thinks not only of Pearse, but also of some of his associates in the rebellion—of Macdonagh, born in the same year as Pearse (1878), like him a teacher, and like him a poet ; or of Joseph Plunkett, poet and editor of the *Irish Review*—one begins to regard the rebellion as a rising of stormful and storm-tossed poets, insurgent in their actions as they had been insurgent in their verse. Such a view, however, is very far from the truth. It was James Connolly, more than any man, who forced the rebellion at the last ; and Connolly, if he was something of a scholar, and if he too, like Pearse, would fain go back to a golden Gaelic past, was emphatically a man of action, hasty, impetuous, overbold. Nor, even if some of the leaders were scholars and poets, were the rank and file of their stamp. They came largely from the Dublin slums. ' The rebellion ', it has been said, ' was primarily and essentially a revolt of the Dublin slums, using as its military instrument the Citizen Army, . . . a revolt of the Dublin slums in alliance with neo-Fenianism . . . using as its military instrument the Irish Volunteers.'

The plan of the projected rebellion was roughly threefold. It included the seizure of Dublin ; a rising in the country which would distract the troops in Ireland and prevent them from being dispatched to Dublin ; and a German attack on the east coast of England which

would either have prevented the sending of reinforcements to Ireland, or, if they were sent, would have found an easier field of operations in England as a result. The landing of arms on Good Friday was to have been the first step ; the general mobilization of the volunteers on Easter Sunday was to have been the second ; and a general rebellion, not only in Dublin but also over the whole of southern and western Ireland, was to have been the last. The first step miscarried when Casement only landed to be arrested and the supply of arms was never landed at all : the second came to nothing when, in consequence of the failure of the first, the order for mobilization was countermanded by Professor MacNeill. Connolly nevertheless persisted, and he carried the day for rebellion—even if it were only of a limited rebellion in Dublin, or rather, in a section of Dublin—in the anxious deliberations which were held on Easter Saturday and Sunday. But there was now no chance of success for the threefold plan. Part, indeed, of Dublin was seized on Easter Monday, and held during Easter week ; but there was no general rising in the country-side—though there were sporadic movements on a small scale—and the German attack on the east coast of England resolved itself into a flying raid by some fast cruisers on Lowestoft and Yarmouth on Wednesday, April 26, a day after reinforcements from England had already reached Dublin. There was severe street-fighting in Dublin till the morning of Saturday, April 29, in which 106 soldiers and 180 civilians were killed, and 334 soldiers and 614 civilians were wounded, in addition to some casualties among loyal volunteers and the police. A reign of martial law succeeded the week of street-fighting : 15 of the participators in the rebellion—including Pearse, Connolly, Plunkett, and Macdonagh—were executed under sentences of military courts : a number of others were imprisoned, and a large number were deported.

The first act of the rebels had been the seizure of the General Post Office in Dublin, where they flew the colours, and posted a proclamation announcing the inauguration, of an Irish Republic. Two sentences from that proclamation may serve as a summary of the origins and aims of the rebellion. 'Having organized and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organization, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army; having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first place on her own strength, she strikes with full confidence of victory. We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible.' Whosesoever was the pen, James Connolly dictated the first clause of the second of these sentences.

The rebellion of 1916 seems to constitute, at first sight, a grave indictment against the whole system of Irish government, not only in the past, but also in the actual and living present. Whatever benefits the last fifty years have brought to Ireland—whatever the value of judicial rents or land purchase or local self-government—all this, it may seem, and whatever else could be done in addition to this, profited nothing. Ireland desired something more—something different in quality—something above and beyond an infinity of Land Acts, and above and beyond recurrent Home Rule Bills which came to nothing: she desired to possess her own soul. In the very middle of an agonizing war—our enemies might argue—with the whole British Commonwealth engaged, she stood apart; and she not only stood apart—she took the other side. Rebellion failed, it is true; but could anything be more damning than the mere fact of rebellion?

But the fact is that Ireland did not rebel. There was a rebellion in Ireland: there was not a rebellion of Ireland. And what is more, the rebellion in Ireland was as much, or still more, a rebellion of one Irish party against another, as it was a rebellion of Irishmen against the connexion with Great Britain. The Nationalist party in Ireland stood loyally, side by side with Protestant Ulster, in defence of the general British cause. The rebellion was largely a rebellion of those extremists who have, during the last fifty years, found their enemies no less in the Home Rule party of Ireland than in the British Government.

II. After the Rebellion

(a) *The Growth of Sinn Fein*

The Rebellion was not made by Sinn Fein—except in so far as Sinn Fein was an atmosphere in which it flashed into flame and burned intensely for its brief hour; but the rebellion made Sinn Fein, in the sense that it multiplied its adherents, made it a party, and gave it a concrete policy and a constitution. The first result, indeed, of the rebellion was a shuddering reaction from violence and a general welcome to any firm hand that would give order and security. Six days of street-fighting, mixed in their course with looting—not of the rebels themselves, but of the poorest and neediest elements in the slums—and threatening to end in famine, afforded a drastic experience of the meaning of a policy of physical force. But the executions came; and day after day told its tale of death from May 3 to May 11. If Ireland had welcomed the suppression of the rebellion, Irish sentiment was offended by this aftermath of death. The Government, it is true, could hardly pardon rebels who had caused serious bloodshed; but there were many Irishmen who could hardly pardon the Government for repaying bloodshed by bloodshed. To resentment

was soon added fear—fear of the extension of conscription to Ireland; fear of the partition of Ireland (under a scheme mooted by the Government in the summer of 1916, but eventually dropped) into a Home Rule and an 'excluded' area. Resentment and fear both sought an outlet; and in the absence of the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army, now both suppressed —in the impotence of the parliamentary party, now left behind by the rapid movement of events and sentiments— Sinn Fein provided such an outlet. Throughout the latter half of 1916 the numbers of its adherents steadily grew, and early in 1917 it developed into an organized party with a definite constitution and policy.

The signal for this development was given by the release and the return to Ireland, at the end of 1916, of a number of interned prisoners, among them Mr. Arthur Griffiths, who had long been a conspicuous figure in the Sinn Fein movement. The policy of abstention from Parliament and of refusal to recognize the British Government—a policy, as we have seen (p. 27), modelled on precedents drawn from the history of Austria-Hungary— was again advocated in his journal; and in order to provide a supply of members of Parliament who would abstain from the sessions of Parliament Sinn Fein now entered the party lists and began to contest constituencies. Many of the younger Irish priests had joined its ranks; and, partly by the aid of their advocacy, Count Plunkett, the father of Joseph Plunkett, was chosen by a considerable majority as Sinn Fein member for North Roscommon in a by-election held in February 1917. Henceforth the organization of Sinn Fein clubs and the contesting of elections took the place of the drilling and training of volunteers in the days before the rebellion. In April, a few days after the first anniversary of the rebellion, Sinn Fein held one of its conventions. It was attended by representatives not only of Sinn Fein clubs,

but also of a number of public elected bodies and labour organizations; and it enunciated a policy of separation, to be achieved by the representation of Ireland at the Peace Conference and by the action of that Conference. This was to assert a new principle—the principle of the international status of the Irish question—though the principle was one which had already been adumbrated when Casement (if indeed he were the author) sought to urge, in the article already mentioned, that Irish independence was a matter of vital importance to the system of Europe and especially to the interests of Germany. But if adumbrated before, the principle was based by Sinn Fein on broader and deeper grounds—on the right of nations to self-determination and on the duty of a League of Nations to guarantee that right. So based and so stated, the principle at once contained a logical thrust against the declarations of British statesmen that Great Britain was fighting in defence of the right of small nations to determine their destinies freely, and a shrewd challenge to those advocates of a League of Nations who desired such a League for the protection of such nations. The theory of Sinn Fein is academically strong; but it may be suggested that in practice no nationalist question acquires an international status until it becomes, or threatens to become, a cause of serious conflict between two States. And at the present time there is no State which is involved in such a conflict with Great Britain on the Irish question, or is likely to urge against her position in Ireland that principle of a natural right of self-determination which (it must be noted) has only been urged by her statesmen with regard to nationalist questions on which such a conflict had actually arisen.[1]

[1] The argument I have suggested is, briefly stated, that the right of self-determination has not been laid down as an absolute right by British spokesmen (or by the spokesmen of other countries), but as a right relative to those nationalities whose

During the course of 1917 Sinn Fein won a number of by-elections. At one of these de Valera, one of the commandants in the rebellion of 1916, who had been serving a sentence of imprisonment but had been released, along with other prisoners, just before the first meeting of the Irish Convention in July, was elected member for East Clare. At a new convention of the Sinn Fein party (as it must now be called), held in October, he was unanimously elected president, and henceforth he became its leading representative. He assumed command at a propitious moment, when the flood-tide of popularity was carrying the party forward swiftly and easily upon its flow. It was calculated in the autumn of 1917 that about 1,200 clubs, with a membership of some 250,000, were affiliated to the party; and hardly a Nationalist seat could be regarded as safe if it were challenged by a Sinn Fein candidate. The truth was that the old Nationalist party was rapidly declining, and the rapid growth of Sinn Fein was the measure of its rapid decline. The Nationalist party had always been something of a 'machine' (p. 17), resting on a limited caucus rather than on a spontaneous popular emotion, and connected with particular economic interests—more particularly with what may be termed the shop-keeping interest—rather than with the general interests of the Irish people at large. Above all it was a machine controlled by old hands; and a new generation was rising insurgent to proclaim a new dispensation. There is something in the development of the Sinn Fein party akin to the movement in Great Britain, noticeable in recent years, against party machines and mere 'politicians'; or again, from another point of view, it may be likened to the 'shop steward' and the 'rank and file' movements in the British labour

position is definitely in question between warring, or at any rate conflicting, powers. An absolute right of self-determination, to be guaranteed by a League of Nations, would mean a chaos of dissolution which the League was bound to perpetuate.

world. It would indeed be a mistake, and a grave mistake, to deny the popularity of its extremist policy, or to fail to recognize that anti-British feeling was perhaps the main support of a party that advocated first and foremost a clean separation from the British connexion. But it would also be a mistake to leave out of account the other factors which have just been mentioned ; and it is these factors, as well as anti-British feeling, that have enabled the Sinn Fein party in the general election at the end of 1918 to drive the Nationalist party from the field, and to return over seventy successful candidates where the Nationalist party could return no more than seven.

The convention which elected de Valera president also formulated the constitution, and laid down the main lines of the organization, of the Sinn Fein party. According to the constitution, the aim of Sinn Fein was to secure ' international recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic ',[1] and the methods of securing this aim were to be opposition to British or any foreign Government, and the use of all means which might render British power impotent to hold Ireland in subjection against its will. More especially a constituent assembly was to be invoked, of persons chosen by Irish constituencies, to formulate measures for the welfare of the whole people of Ireland[2]—a policy which, in view of the recent election of over seventy Sinn Fein members by Irish constituencies, the immediate future may see some attempt to put into practice. Meanwhile the organization of the party was based on democratic lines :

[1] Of late the Sinn Fein party has apparently decided to become for the future the Irish Republican party.

[2] The formulation of such measures was actually taken in hand at the end of 1917, when the executive of the party appointed a Food Committee to prevent Ireland from being denuded of her supplies of food and to secure the proper distribution of these supplies.

a large and representative executive was created; and a pointed contrast was thus drawn with the organization of the Nationalist party.

(b) *The Rise of an Irish Labour Party*

Sinn Fein is a political and nationalist movement. By its side, and, to some extent, in divergence from its aims, there developed in Ireland in the course of 1917 a social and labour movement of a new type. This is a factor of primary importance; and indeed it may prove in the issue to be the cardinal factor in Irish affairs. The labour movement in Dublin, more especially under the guidance of Connolly, had attempted, as we have seen, to hold at one and the same time the two causes of international Socialism and of historical Gaelic nationalism.[1] This attempt to fuse an exclusive political nationalism with a social doctrine of collectivism was hardly in consonance with the past history of Irish labour and trade unionism in Ireland. That history shows two phases—the first not of nationalism, but of an exaggerated localism; the second, again, not of nationalism, but of a tendency to the inclusion of Irish labour in the labour organizations of Great Britain.

In the beginning, and indeed almost to the end, of the nineteenth century, trade unionism in Ireland was marked by a narrow and jealous localism. 'The trade clubs of Dublin, Cork, and Limerick', Mr. Sidney Webb

[1] Connolly had sought to reconcile the two causes by arguing that Gaelic antiquity showed something of a system of communism. But in reality the Irish septs, far back in their history, possessed little of the communal life ascribed to them by Connolly; and cattle-owning chiefs, giving feudal grants of a 'stock' of cattle to vassals, and exercising rights to entertainment (termed coigne and livery) over the members of the sept, had long been the central feature of Irish social life before the date of the English plantations which, according to Connolly, introduced an alien capitalism into Ireland.

wrote over twenty years ago, 'have always been the main citadels of local monopoly.'[1] The Cork stone-masons, for example, insisted on the right of working at Fermoy, but refused to admit stone-masons from Fermoy or elsewhere to any employment in Cork; and much the same was true of the Dublin coopers. This was a relic of the exclusive policy of the local craft-guilds of the Middle Ages, each confined to a single town, and each claiming a monopoly of work in that town—a relic which survived longest in port towns. On the other hand, English trade unions, by the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria, were founding branches in Ireland, but were apt to be discouraged by their experience of those branches. Not only were members of the Irish branches prone to disagree among themselves, and quick to insist on striking against the admission of members from other Irish towns to any employment in their own, but the Irish lodges also drew heavily on the central funds of their unions, and dispensed benefits with a generosity that paid no regard to rules or regulations. The operative stone-masons, for instance, finding in 1840 that they had received from Ireland £47 10*s.* 0*d.* and sent to Ireland no less than £545, in the course of the preceding year, took the drastic step of excluding all their Irish branches; and the printers, the tailors, and the shipwrights, complaining of incorrect accounts, excessive benefits, and habitual ignoring of registered rules, were compelled, at different times, to adopt the same policy.

None the less it was impossible for Irish trade unionism to exist in isolation, as it was also impossible for English trade unionism to leave Irish labour unorganized and underpaid. The economic systems of Great Britain and Ireland were—and are still to-day—interconnected and

[1] *Industrial Democracy*, p. 75; see also, for the facts mentioned in the rest of this paragraph, ibid., pp. 83–7.

interdependent; and trade unionism, if it was to adjust itself to this fact, must be a single system for both countries. Thirty years ago a tendency to the inclusion of Irish labour in the trade unions of Great Britain began to gather weight, and by the end of the nineteenth century most of the great trade unions had a number of Irish branches. The local trade clubs in Ireland, while they were unwilling to amalgamate with one another, were ready to become branches of British trade unions; and though general Irish unions might be founded, they were unable to acquire members or to gather funds. The Irish Railway Workers' Trade Union, for example, founded in 1910, had in 1912 only 133 members; but it had certainly a growing deficit.[1] Everything, therefore, tended towards the inclusion of Ireland in the sphere of British trade unionism; and to-day thousands of Irish workmen belong to trade unions such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers or the National Union of Railwaymen. There is still, indeed, friction between the Irish members and the central offices of the unions to which they belong; and the relations of its Irish members to the central office of the N. U. R. furnish an instructive example both of such friction and of the necessity for union which exists in spite of friction. The Irish members of the society complained in 1916 that they had failed to secure an advance of wages corresponding to the advance obtained in Great Britain, and they were prepared to blame the central officials for this failure; while the officials replied that the imperfect organization of the Irish railwaymen was the real cause. 'There is discontent among the Irish railwaymen, and this has found expression in demands for autonomy within the union. The Irishmen want, not a separate union, but an Irish council with considerable power of initiating and conducting movements, and this, or something like

[1] Cole and Arnot, *Trade Unionism on the Railways*, p. 13.

it, they will probably have to receive, despite the difficulties involved in the proposal.' [1]

In the tendency towards the inclusion of Irish labour in British trade unions there was some interruption, at any rate as far as Dublin was concerned, between 1913 and 1916. Larkin, as we have seen (p. 80), brought about a cleavage between English labour and the labour movement in Dublin; and Connolly, as we have also seen, widened the cleavage. But the economic bond of connexion still remained; and it showed its strength at the end of 1917. The Sinn Fein Convention, in harmony with its policy of separation, invited Irish trade unionists who belonged to British trade unions to leave those unions, and thus to lose the financial backing in times of dispute, and the moral support at all times, which membership of British trade unions gave. The leaders of Irish labour protested. 'They urged that, apart from the largely unskilled labour indifferently grouped and organized in the Irish Transport Workers' Union, skilled workers in Ireland were relatively too few and too dispersed to stand aside from the British trade union system; the most important bodies of skilled workmen in Ireland—such as the railwaymen, the engineers and allied tradesmen, and the builders—depended so much in the present state of their development upon their unions and federations with headquarters in Great Britain, that to sever them from the British labour movement (especially at a time when that movement was taking active steps to extend its influence in the national life) would compromise the whole basis of the growth of trade union organization in Ireland.' [2]

The protest of the Irish labour leaders against the attitude of Sinn Fein towards trade unionism was all

[1] Ibid., p. 61.

[2] Wells and Marlowe, *The Irish Convention and Sinn Fein*, pp. 68–9.

the more telling in view of the rapid developments which were taking place in the organization of Irish labour. The National Union of Railwaymen—perhaps the best organized and certainly one of the most progressive of British trade unions—was acquiring a large body of new members in Ireland; and the railwaymen, with their unique opportunity for advocating the cause through the length and breadth of the country, became the apostles of trade unionism to other classes of workers, and especially to agricultural labourers. On the model of the Triple Industrial Alliance established in Great Britain in 1915 (a working alliance of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers), a triple alliance was projected in Ireland which was to embrace railwaymen, transport workers, and (in place of the miners of the British alliance) agricultural labourers. Before the end of 1917 an Irish Labour party had also been constituted, under a scheme which allowed both trade unions to join the party collectively and individual trade unionists to join separately where the whole union was averse to joining. The latter provision was especially important, as it enabled trade unionists in north-east Ireland to join the Labour party, even if their union as a whole was opposed to collective affiliation. By the end of the year the party numbered more than 100,000 adherents; and thus by the side of Sinn Fein a new and in some respects broader organization had definitely arisen.

Ireland to-day is the home of four parties—the Unionists, the Nationalists, Sinn Fein, and the Labour party. Not to speak of the two older parties, we may perhaps venture on some reflections about the two younger. Sinn Fein is a nationalist party—political, logical, extremist. It is almost oblivious of the deep social and economic factors that matter at least as much as the political. It forgets the economic bonds between Ireland and Great Britain: it forgets equally the economic cleavage

between labour and capital within Ireland. The Irish Labour party is a party which is at once nationalist, in the sense that it is an Irish party, and also social, in the sense that it is the party of labour. It is not oblivious either of the economic connexion between Irish labour and British labour, or of the economic opposition of different interests in Ireland. It is less academic, and more alive to living realities, than the Sinn Fein party. Much will depend on its action in any case; and very much may depend on its action if, as is possible if not indeed probable, a Labour Government comes into power at Westminster in the near future. It is difficult to see how Sinn Fein can act with any British party, except, indeed, through an opportunist alliance, uncemented by any real identity of interests, which will be fraught with danger for both sides of the alliance. It is easy to see how the Irish Labour party might act in conjunction with the British Labour party, and how a real identity of interests might firmly cement an alliance between the two. A hope which some of us may cherish is the hope that such an alliance may be the way of ultimate settlement of the Irish question.

(c) *The Convention*

Side by side with Irish parties there is always the British Government, sometimes acting in conjunction with one party, sometimes in alliance with another, but generally the butt of Irish wit and the target for Irish shafts. The policy of the British Government after the rebellion of 1916 was not much more than to keep Ireland quiet and 'get on with the war'; but in the execution of this policy it must be confessed that it showed a certain amount of vacillation. In December 1916, as we have seen, the new Government formed by Mr. Lloyd George released a number of interned prisoners: two months later, in February 1917, a number of persons were arrested on a somewhat vague charge of conspiracy, and, without

being imprisoned, were deported from Ireland to live where they chose in Great Britain. These arrests led the Nationalist party to assert itself once more in opposition ; and after recording a protest against the action of the Government, the members of the party marched in a body out of the House of Commons. The protest was followed by an appeal, directed to the United States and the self-governing British Dominions, but more especially to the United States, that ' they would bring pressure to bear on the British Government to act towards Ireland in accordance with the principles for which it was fighting in Europe '. The United States was just preparing to enter the war ; and the British Government—probably in view of this appeal, and certainly some days before the declaration of war by the United States—promised to attempt once more to find a settlement of the Irish question. Partition was understood to be the policy contemplated by the Government ; but such a policy, already thoroughly unpopular in Ireland, was doomed in advance when, before any formal announcement of policy had been made, a protest against partition was issued by eighteen bishops of the Roman and three of the Anglican Church in Ireland. In the middle of May Mr. Lloyd George finally announced two alternative policies—the one of partition, on the basis of ' county option ', or, in other words, of a *plébiscite* in each county of Ulster to decide whether it would be included in, or excluded from, the operation of the Home Rule Act of 1914 ; the other ' of assembling a convention of Irishmen of all parties for the purpose of providing a scheme of Irish self-government '. The first alternative was already out of court ; and the second alternative thus held the field.

There were several precedents for such a convention in the recent history of Ireland. We have already seen how in 1895 a Recess Committee, catholic and non-

partisan in character, had prepared the way for the institution of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (p. 74); and how again in 1902 a joint conference had formulated the Dunraven Treaty which formed the basis of Mr. Wyndham's Act of 1903 (p. 61). These precedents had inspired a body of Irishmen, including men such as Lord Macdonell and Mr. George Russell ('A. E.'), and entitling itself the Irish Conference Committee, to propose the plan of a convention as early as the end of 1916. That plan was now adopted by the Government; and the Irish Convention which ultimately met in July 1917 was thus convened, unlike the Recess Committee of 1895 and the joint conference of 1902, by the British Government. The nature of the summons had the effect of excluding one body of opinion from representation in the Convention. The Sinn Fein party refused to accept the invitation to participate in an assembly convened by the British Government and limited in its scope, by the express terms of its reference, to submitting to that Government 'a constitution for the future government of Ireland within the Empire'. Apart from the absence of representatives of the Sinn Fein party, the Convention, in the form in which it was summoned by the Government, was a body which reflected all shades of Irish thought and all phases of Irish life. It included Unionists, Nationalists, and representatives of labour: it contained representatives of local authorities (almost a half of its members came on this footing), representatives of Churches and of commerce, and nominees of the Government chosen with a view to the representation of different points of view. It numbered, in its final form, ninety-five members, and it included, as its debates were subsequently to show, some five different types of opinion—two Nationalist, the one moderate, the other advanced; two Unionist, the one, which came from the south of Ireland, moderate itself and ready to act with the moderate Nationalists,

the other, which came from the north-east, stern and unbending; and one—the type of opinion among the majority of the representatives of labour—prepared to act in conjunction with the moderate sections among both the Unionists and the Nationalists. At the head of all, and seeking to blend all, sat Sir Horace Plunkett, whom it was the first act of the Convention to elect as its Chairman, and whose name is itself its own explanation.

The delegates of the Ulster Unions, so far as the *Report* of the proceedings throws light on their action, and so far as any constructive contribution to those proceedings was concerned, might almost as well have been absent. They did not come with open minds, prepared to join in a frank discussion, or to take from and give to others as the argument developed around a common table. They were the only representatives in the Convention who were unfree; and they alone were bound by a procedure which practically limited them *ad audiendum et referendum* during the proceedings of the Convention. Nor was this all. The Ulster Unionists had a pledge from the Government (of which, it must be remembered, Sir Edward Carson remained a member until the beginning of 1918) that no scheme would be forced upon them with which their representatives were not in agreement. The representatives of Ulster Unionists were pledged to their party, and that party had a pledge from the Government; and thus Ulster Unionism enjoyed from the first a veto on any finding of the Convention (so far as its application to itself was concerned) which was not to its own liking. In a word, Ulster Unionism possessed a trump card; and it is no great wonder that its representatives seem to have taken no great interest in the proceedings at the 'round table', or that they confined their energies to formulating a scheme of exclusion from the Home Rule Act of 1914.

It was otherwise with the Southern Unionists. They were unpledged themselves, and they had no pledge from the Government. They lived among Nationalists, and they tried to find some way of living in peace and friendship with their neighbours. They found in the Convention that Nationalist opinion now went beyond the lines of the Home Rule Bill introduced in 1912, and placed on the Statute Book in 1914, and that it tended in the direction of demanding the Dominion system of self-government. They did not return an answer of *non possumus* to this demand: they tried to meet it and to make terms with it. The history of the Convention is largely the history of the attempt of the Southern Unionists to attain a compromise with the Nationalists on the application of the Dominion principle of self-government to the solution of the Irish question.

It may at first sight appear surprising that the Nationalists in the Convention should have gone beyond the scope of the Home Rule Act, and should in the issue have made fiscal autonomy, to the full extent to which it was enjoyed by the self-governing Dominions, the chief corner-stone of their cause. The delegates of the Ulster Unionists, in a separate report which appears in the general *Report* of the proceedings of the Convention, expressed themselves in this sense: 'We expected that the real work of the Convention would have been directed to a sincere and patriotic endeavour to find common ground somewhere between the 1914 Act on the one hand, and the views of Ulster on the other. From the first week in which the Convention sat we urged this course, and repeatedly expressed our disappointment that almost every Nationalist speech outlined a form of Home Rule far in advance of any previous claim.'[1] But the truth was that much water—and some of it stained and turbid water—had flowed under the bridges of the Liffey since 1914; that

[1] *Report* (Cd. 9019), p. 31.

opinion in Ireland had been tending towards the Dominion principle of self-government for some time past; and that the Nationalists, face to face with Sinn Fein and its advocacy of an Irish Republic, could not hope to gain Irish support for any terms less than some approach to Dominion status. Full Dominion status would have involved four consequences, three of them positive and one of them negative: it would have involved complete control of taxation, direct and indirect, complete control of commercial policy, the control of forces for Irish defence, and the absence of Irish representatives from the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In the 'Heads of the Scheme' put forward by Dr. O'Donnell, the Bishop of Raphoe (the constitution-maker and one of the ablest Nationalist representatives of the Convention), the first and the second of these consequences were fully drawn: the third was so far modified that the Army and Navy were excluded from the purview of the Irish Parliament, but, on the other hand, it was proposed that the assent of that Parliament should be required for any introduction of conscription into Ireland, and that after five years Ireland should be free—with the assent of the Imperial Conference, in which she would then be herself represented—to raise and maintain a territorial force; while the fourth consequence was so far drawn, that it was proposed to abolish any representation of Ireland at Westminster until a federal Parliament should be constituted.[1] It was the task of Lord Middleton (the peace-maker and moderator in the Convention), and of the Southern Unionists whom he led, to seek to obtain a considerable modification of the 'Heads of the Scheme', which was already in itself, to a certain extent, a modification of the full Dominion system of self-government. The Nationalists were willing to go some way to meet the Southern Unionists on all points except that of fiscal autonomy, or, in other words, complete control of taxation, direct

[1] *Report*, pp. 60–1.

and indirect. They would consent to some measure of representation at Westminster: they would consider a guarantee of free trade between Great Britain and Ireland: they would admit some modification of the provision relating to a territorial force; but they clung to complete control of taxation, direct and indirect—and especially indirect. This was common ground to the majority of moderate and the minority of advanced Nationalists. Sir Horace Plunkett stated their view in a letter printed in the *Report*: 'to the great majority of the Irish Nationalists fiscal autonomy, advocated as a means of industrial development at home and of commercial expansion abroad, appeals, perhaps even more strongly, as a symbol of political autonomy.'[1] The Nationalists themselves stated it unequivocally in a memorandum prepared by Mr. Redmond, the Bishop of Raphoe, Mr. Devlin, and Mr. George Russell: 'We regard Ireland as a nation, an economic entity. . . . Self-government does not exist where those nominally entrusted with affairs of government have not control of fiscal and economic policy.'[2]

Customs were thus not merely customs to the Nationalists: they were something more: they were a symbol and a creed. At the beginning of 1918 the Convention almost came to shipwreck on this matter. The Nationalists could not consent to surrender customs to the control of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, fearing that to lose the symbol was to lose all for which the symbol stood: the Southern Unionists could not consent to surrender them to the control of an Irish Parliament, fearing that a separate system of Irish customs would impair the control of the United Kingdom over its commercial policy, and fearing, too, that it would render difficult, if not impossible, the inclusion of Ireland in any scheme for the federal reorganization of the United Kingdom.

[1] Ibid., p. 64. [2] Ibid., p. 67.

Under these circumstances the British Government was driven to intervene in the proceedings of the Convention ; and the Prime Minister, after meeting some of its members in London in the middle of February, proposed a solution which, in a slightly modified form, was adopted by a majority of the Nationalists and by the Southern Unionists. The solution, as we shall see, was practically a shelving of the question ; and this was the note on which the Convention ended at the end of March. Strictly speaking, the Convention itself never actually reported. Its chairman and secretary, by its direction, submitted a 'report of its proceedings' to the British Government, and the chairman, on his own account, prefixed to that report a 'letter of transmission' from himself to the Prime Minister. There was thus no agreed report of the Convention : there was not even a report of the majority of the Convention : there was simply a report about its proceedings which its chairman and secretary were authorized by a majority of the Convention to send to the British Government. The point may seem formal ; but it indicates the difficulties in which the Convention ended.

Yet the proceedings of the Convention showed, and perhaps they helped to create, some new and hopeful tendencies. The most striking among these tendencies was the readiness of the majority of the Nationalists and the Southern Unionists to join in seeking a compromise on which they could both agree, and the readiness of the majority of the Labour representatives to aid in seeking that compromise. The compromise, it is true, was not actually attained ; and what, in the event, was secured may be almost described as a compromise about a compromise, or, perhaps more exactly, as a makeshift settlement of those terms of the compromise on which the different parties seeking agreement were still unable to agree. Under this compromise—to which a majority of the Nationalists, all the Southern Unionists, and five out

of the seven Labour representatives agreed—there was to be erected a bicameral Irish Parliament, differing in several respects from the Parliament established by the Home Rule Act of 1914.[1] The Upper House, or Senate of this Parliament was not, like that of the Act of 1914, to be a body nominated by the Irish Executive: it was to be a body, as the Convention itself had largely been, representative of the different facets and aspects of Irish life. It was to contain 64 members, including 7 representatives of churches, 3 Lord Mayors of Irish cities and 8 representatives of county councils, 15 representatives of commerce and industry, and 4 representatives of Labour, together with 15 elected peers, 11 nominated members, and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland. The Senate was, in a word, to represent interests—ecclesiastical, local, and economic; and it was thus constituted on a basis which many have advocated for Second Chambers in general—that they should represent the plurality of the community and its different mental factors, while the First Chamber should represent the homogeneity of the community and the different material areas into which, for purposes of such representation, it is divided. The Lower House of the new Parliament was, in the first place, to contain 160 elected members—about the same number as that laid down in the Act of 1914; but there were some new and important recommendations in the scheme of the Convention, which went beyond the provisions of that Act. Forty per cent. of the membership of the Irish House of Commons was to be guaranteed to Unionists; and for this purpose there were to be 20 members nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, to represent interests not otherwise adequately represented in the three provinces other than Ulster, and twenty additional members elected by Ulster constituencies to represent commercial, industrial, and agricultural interests. These new members, who brought the total membership of the Irish Parliament

[1] See § 42 of the *Report*, pp. 24–9.

up to the number of 200, interfered to some extent with the symmetry of the scheme on which the Parliament was constructed; for their presence meant that interests were being considered, if in a different way, in the composition of the Lower as well as in that of the Upper House. But they were designed by the Nationalists as a safeguard and a concession to Unionists' fears; and it was understood that they were to be temporary. The additional nominated members were to disappear as a whole or in part after fifteen years: the additional elected members might disappear if a vote to that effect were passed by a three-fourths majority of both Houses sitting together.

The general power of the Irish Parliament thus constituted was to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland. That power was to be subject to the supreme power and authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom; it was to be subject to certain exclusions—the making of war and peace, the Army and Navy, and treaties and foreign relations were all to be excluded from its competence—and it was also to be subject to certain restrictions, more especially to a prohibition of laws interfering with religious equality. These exclusions and restrictions are to some extent modelled on the terms of the Home Rule Act; but it has to be remembered, as regards the 'exclusions', that the Convention had discussed, if it had not settled, the question of conceding or denying to the Irish Parliament control over commercial policy (a question bound up with that of control over customs), and that it had discussed and adopted a report of a sub-committee, which suggested that at some time Ireland should provide a local force, of the strength of two divisions, to serve in Ireland during peace and in the United Kingdom during war, and that a system of compulsory military service should not in practice be enforced in Ireland without the assent and co-operation of the Irish Parlia-

ment. Where the Convention departed most definitely from the scheme of the Home Rule Act was on the question of 'reserved services' and in the matter of finance. It recommended that, as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities, the Irish Police and Postal Services should become automatically subject to the Irish Parliament; but except for the reservation of these two services for the period of the war—and even that under the unified control of the Irish and Imperial Governments—the system of reserved services disappeared.[1] It recommended, again, that all branches of taxation, other than Customs and Excise, should come under the control of the Irish Parliament, and that, while the question of its control of Customs and Excise should be postponed for further consideration after the war, that question should nevertheless be considered and decided by the Parliament of the United Kingdom within seven years after the conclusion of peace. On one point—the continuation of Irish representation in the Parliament of the United Kingdom—the Convention endorsed the Home Rule Act. Ireland would still remain, in some matters, subject to that Parliament to a greater extent than Dominion Parliaments, and ought for that reason to receive representation which they did not receive; nor would the Unionists of Southern Ireland in any case have consented to abandon the principle of such representation. It was proposed, therefore, that forty-two Irish members should sit in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and that they should be elected by the members of the Irish House of Commons, divided for that purpose into provincial panels, and voting according to the method

[1] It should be added that, under the scheme of the Convention, the Irish Government might defer taking over services relating, for example, to Old Age Pensions and National Insurance. This meant that a system of 'deferred taking over' of services by Ireland replaced a system of 'reservation' of services by the British Government.

of proportional representation. The scheme of the Convention thus went beyond the Home Rule Act, in abandoning the system of reserved services and in leaving open the possibility of financial autonomy: it fell short of a scheme of Dominion self-government, partly because financial autonomy was thus, to say the least, deferred; partly because the right of control over commercial policy was not specified, as indeed, in view of the postponement of a settlement on the question of financial control, it hardly could be; partly, again, because the institution of a force for the defence of Ireland had been left to a time and a method unspecified; and finally because representatives of Ireland were still to sit in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. On the whole, it would seem not unfair to conclude that the scheme of the Convention was nearer to the Home Rule Act than it was to Dominion self-government.

Unhappily, the scheme of the Convention was not *felix opportunitate partus*. It saw the light early in April 1918: it came before the world at a moment when the British Government had at last resolved to enforce conscription upon Ireland. The German offensive was in full swing: every man was needed: the age for compulsory military service was raised, and Ireland was at last included in its scope. It was a sad coincidence that the *Report* should appear at such a time; and the coincidence was all the sadder, as one of the findings of the Convention was a finding against the application of conscription to Ireland except with the assent and co-operation of an Irish Parliament. As the days passed, the coincidence between the publication of the *Report* and the resolution to enforce conscription in Ireland became more than a coincidence: it became something of a connexion. The Government began to promise legislation on the lines of the *Report*, if Ireland would accept conscription; and thus, by a process of tacking, conscription began to be

made part and parcel of an Irish settlement, though the Convention had been convoked, and the Convention had done its work, in entire independence of such a condition. Ireland refused to accept conscription, whatever the concessions which might (or might not) accompany its acceptance. The Catholic clergy led the way in opposition: the Nationalists united with Sinn Fein, and both with the Irish Trades Union Congress, to follow their lead: the Government 'had achieved the miracle of Irish unity'. But if the Government united Ireland in opposition to itself, it did not gain a single Irishman for the Army by its policy of conscription. Conscription was never actually enforced. The Government hesitated: while it hesitated, Germany collapsed; and the war was over. Ireland had been alarmed and united by the threat of conscription: she had been offended by the offer of a bargain under which she was to pay her freedom from conscription as the price of receiving a freedom which she regarded as already her rightful possession; but that was all.

VI

CONCLUSION

If we seek, in conclusion, to take a general view of the state of Ireland, apart from the tumults and the din of the years since 1914, there is much in the history of the last fifty years to give us comfort. Between 1866 and 1918 there has been no vestige of religious persecution by the Government. There has never raged in Ireland a struggle, such as raged in Germany in the days of Bismarck, between the Government and the Roman Church. There is no linguistic question in Ireland: Irish is freely taught in the schools, and its teaching is supported by the State: nowhere, whether in the press, the public meeting, or the pulpit, is its use discouraged. There is no agrarian problem in Ireland: the question of the land has been settled, and settled in favour of the Irish peasant. There are still political questions in Ireland; but Home Rule is an agreed solution as far as Great Britain is concerned, and the difficulties in its way are difficulties within Ireland herself. German philosophers, following Hegel, love to expound the idea of the neutral State. Lifted above 'society', and transcending its clash of competing interests, the State—so they hold—should be neutral, impartial, mediatory, holding the balance fair and even, inclining to no class or interest, but reconciling all to one another in pursuit of the common weal. If we judge the government of Ireland during the last fifty years by this criterion of neutrality, we cannot acquit it of some grave defects. The governing class has belonged in the past mainly to one confession, and that the confession of the minority; and the power of the Government has been invoked to defend the challenged rights and imperilled position of the landlord class. But it is fair to say that these defects belong very largely

to the past. If Clanricarde's estate was in the nineteenth century defended by the Royal Irish Constabulary, he was, in the twentieth century, compulsorily expropriated from some of his estate by an Act of Parliament. And it is fair to add that no confession has been legally penalized, and no statute has been passed to protect or aid one class at the expense of another, except (and the exception is at once justifiable and creditable) in so far as the Irish peasantry has been protected by the scheme of fair rents, and aided by the system of land purchase.

But the true criterion of any system of government is not the German criterion of neutrality. A government is good so far as it rests upon, and gives expression to, the public opinion of a people: it is bad so far as it fails to elicit and to enlist the living play of a people's thought. Judged by this standard government in Ireland has shown its gravest defects; and only of late has it begun to shed those defects. Ireland, it is true, has always been fully represented in the British Parliament since 1800; and the voice of Irish representatives has not gone unheard or unminded in Parliament. But Irish members, though they could express the opinion of Ireland in open Parliament, could not secure the responsibility of Irish government to that opinion. They could obstruct the proceedings of the British Parliament: they could sometimes wrest measures from it; they could not control the Irish Executive. The last twenty years have shown a great change. The Local Government Act of 1898 gave local affairs to the control of local opinion, acting through elected County and District Councils. The Act of 1899 which instituted the Department of Agriculture made that Department largely responsible to Irish opinion. Finally, the Home Rule Act of 1914 went to the root of the matter; and the responsibility of the whole Irish Executive to an Irish Parliament is now a part of the law of the land—but a part of that law which still rests in abeyance.

The problem of Ireland is not solved. It will never be solved by coercion : it will never be solved by benevolence. Coercion has been tried, and Ireland has been put under many Coercion Acts : benevolence has been tried, and Ireland has received a succession of Land Acts much less numerous, but still abundant : the problem of Ireland remains. Each of us is bound to contribute to its solution : each of us is bound to ask himself, ' If I were king —king of the hour and the opportunity—what should I do for Ireland ? ' Each must answer for himself ; and the present writer, slight as his title to speak, must give his answer to the riddle for all (and it is a very little all) that it is worth.

In the modern world transport is king. Methods of transport make us largely what we are. Railways and steamships already determine our civilization in no small measure ; and who knows what changes in that civilization the aeroplane is destined to bring ? We think in different terms, and we live in different ways, as our facilities for communication alter and expand. Perhaps the first of Irish problems is the problem of transport. Ireland is on the sea-ways of the world, and Ireland needs great ports of call for Atlantic traffic. One of the wrongs of his country that rankled in the mind of Casement was that she had lost direct communication with the great world when English steamships ceased to use Queenstown as a port of call : one of the motives that drove him into connexion with Germany was his desire to induce a German steamship company to do what English companies had ceased to do. It may not pay to call at Queenstown : it may not pay to create an Atlantic port on the west of Ireland : if it does not, it may well be the duty, and not only the duty, but also the policy and the interest, of Great Britain to meet the deficit, and to pay the price that will call Ireland into the full flow of the life of the world. That is not all. Irish railways need

improvement, and Irish railways need to be brought into connexion with English railways. We have nationalized British railways: we must nationalize—if nationalization is the way of improvement—the railways of Ireland; and we must connect them with one another. There is need of a ferry-service between England and Ireland, such as the exigencies of war (and are not the exigencies of peace in Ireland almost as great?) have introduced between England and France: there is need of a channel tunnel—such as men begin to think of building between France and England—between England and Ireland. If we are willing to do, or to think of doing, things that pay in war, must we not also be willing to do, or to think of doing, things that will pay in peace?

If these things were done, Ireland would be drawn into the currents of international communication, and Ireland with her communications altered would be another Ireland. The Irish problem would be a new problem, and it would be a more hopeful problem. Ulster would assume a new relation to the rest of Ireland, and the rest of Ireland would assume a new relation to Ulster, under the changed economic condition which a change of communications would bring. But a problem would still remain; and that problem would still be a problem of government. No economic measures can remedy a discontent that is political—and, one may almost say, ultimately moral—a discontent springing from an unsatisfied aspiration that Ireland should assume the responsibility and enjoy the right of controlling her own destinies. And this means that, if the problem remains, and is still a problem of government, the solution also remains, and is still a solution by way of self-government. But the solution itself is still a problem; and that problem is still a problem of finding the right method and measure of self-government. How shall we reconcile Ulster—even, it may be, under changed conditions—to

any system of Home Rule? And how shall we reconcile the rest of Ireland to any system of Home Rule that stops short of a republic, or, at any rate, of Dominion self-government?

> Now, who shall arbitrate?
> Ten men love what I hate,
> Shun what I follow, slight what I receive.

There is one light in the darkness; and if it is a glimmering light it is better than black darkness. There is one way of arbitration; and if it is uncertain, it is still a way. The light and the way may be found in the *Report* of the Irish Convention. 'If I were king', a man may say to himself, 'I would give effect to that *Report*.' It is perhaps unlikely that the present Parliament will give effect to the *Report*. It is possible that a future Parliament may do so, and that a British Labour party may join hands with an Irish Labour party to settle the long-vexed, storm-tossed Irish question, which has baffled for so many years the older parties. After all, we are none of us kings of the present. But we can all of us rule the future—in our thoughts; and by our thoughts we can go some way to make the future what we think it ought to be.

In Ireland the past has often seemed to matter more than the future. The Irish have summoned up to the sessions of silent thought a crowd of witnessing memories. The past of Ireland, if we go back to the days of Plantations and Penal Codes and Clearances, is a past of many wrongs. But to brood over the wrongs of the past is no way of salvation for the future. There are some who bid us remember, and warn us 'lest we forget'. To the writer of these pages, himself a teacher of history, the thought has often come that it were well if humanity could forget its past and banish its historians—forget wrongs and revenges, sufferings inflicted and received,

defeats and victories, triumphs and humiliations, and start afresh. The past has its sanctity: its days are linked to our days by natural piety: its memory may be an inspiration, and its story a beacon-light. Yet he who looks backward may sometimes become a pillar of salt; and we have to love what shall be at least no less than that which has been. We must lift up our eyes to the beckoning hopes on the hills of the future. As one also of Ireland's own poets has said:

> We hold the Ireland in the heart
> More than the land our eyes have seen,
> And love the goal for which we start
> More than the tale of what has been.

To-day we can already see a regenerated Ireland, living a new and prosperous life, with a peasantry helped and aided, largely by its own co-operative effort, beyond the peasantry of any other country. To-morrow we trust to see a self-governing Ireland, still a part of the British Commonwealth, to which she belongs by seven hundred years of history and by every tie of geography, but living, as it is the genius of the British Commonwealth that every part and member of its body should live, freely and fully, according to the working of her own spirit, and by the motion of her own thoughts. For this Commonwealth to which we belong is no 'Empire of Hell': it is, to all whose eyes are not obscured by passion, a living home of divine freedom, in which the ends of the earth are knit together, not for profit, and not for power, but in the name and the hope of self-government.

Whatever the sins of the British Commonwealth, exclusive nationalism is not one of those sins. The Commonwealth has not sought to proselytize all its peoples into acceptance of a single culture. It cannot do so, if it would; for it has many cultures. It flourishes on diversity, because it is free, and because, being free, it is

many-sided. Uniformity would mean the death of its spirit ; compulsory uniformity would mean the instant ruin of its very body. Ireland, within the British Commonwealth, has developed freely—without hindrance, but not without support—her own language, her own co-operative scheme of social order, her own culture, her own way of life. The more she develops from within, the more she pursues her own ideals—the more real is her membership of the Commonwealth, and the deeper is her participation in its common life. There is room for Sinn Fein in the Commonwealth, room enough and to spare, if Sinn Fein will only look around with open eyes. Ourselves, not ' alone ', but in a living union with other free communities—a union that leaves us still ourselves, and makes us more ourselves, because it makes us richer alike in the things of the body and in the things of the spirit —this is the true motto of Ireland, as it is the true motto of every part of our Commonwealth.